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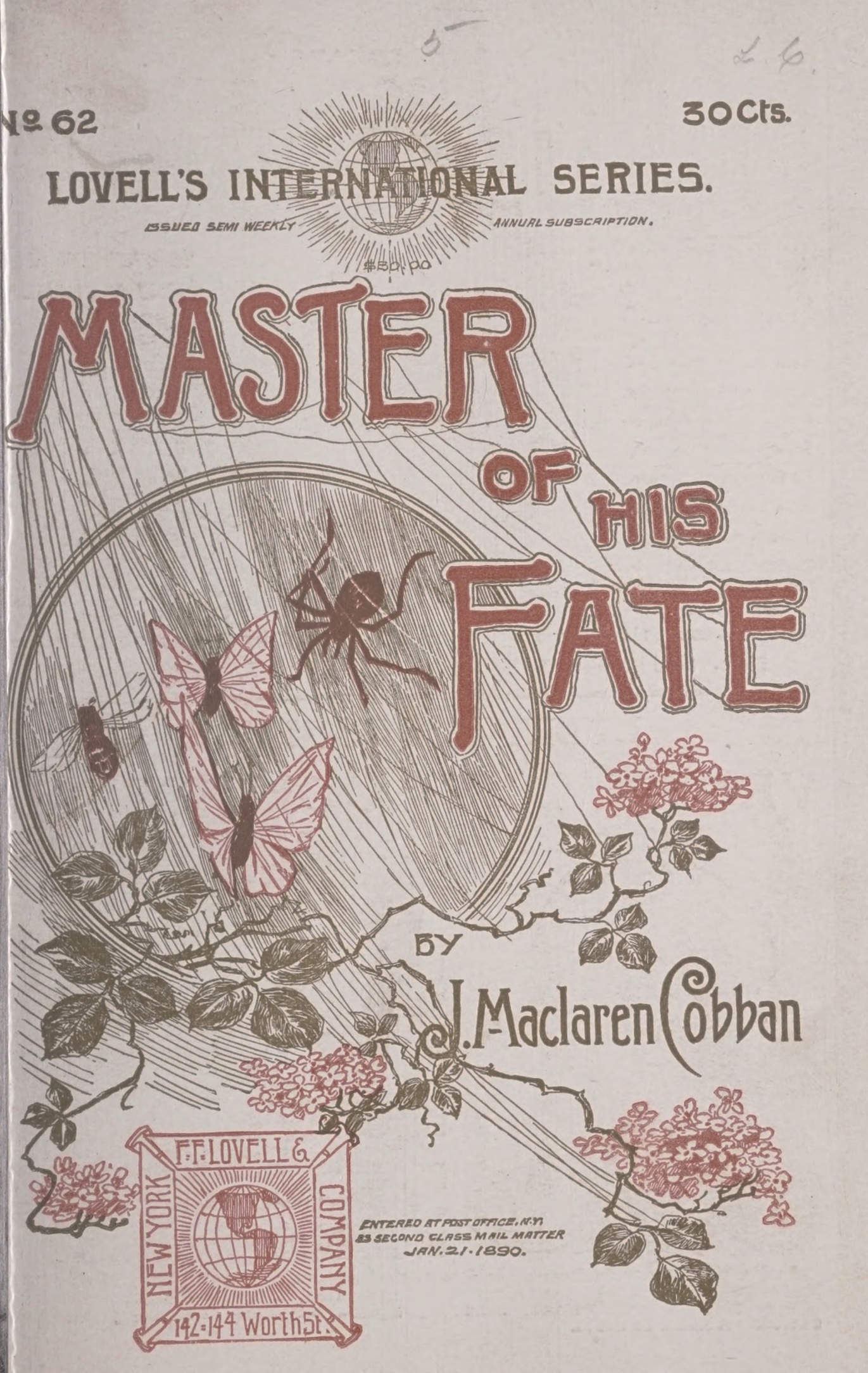

BY

J. Maclaren Cobban

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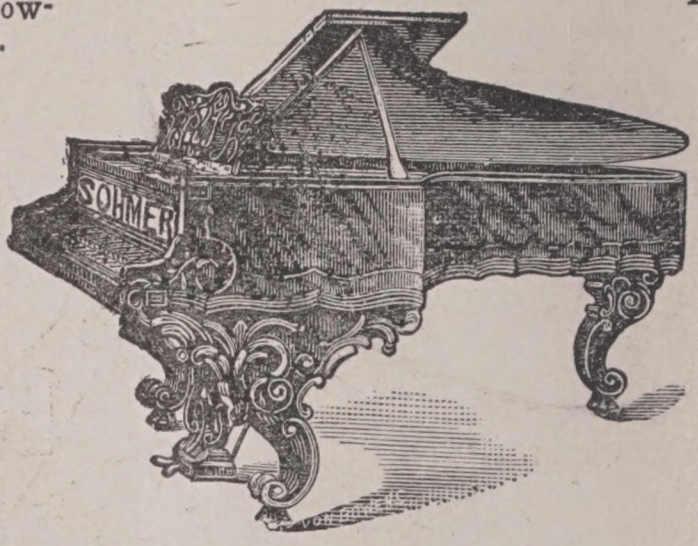


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# MASTER OF HIS FATE

BY

J. MACLAREN COBBAN

AUTHOR OF "THE CURSE OF SOULS," "TINTED VAPOURS," ETC.

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## *To Z. MENNELL, Esq.*

---

*My dear Mennell,*

*It has been my fortune to see something of the practice of the art of healing under widely different conditions, and I know none who better represents the most humane and most exacting of all professions than yourself. The good doctor of this story—the born surgeon and healer, the ever young and alert, the self-forgetful, the faithful friend, gifted with "that exquisite charity which can forgive all things"—is studied from you.*

*It is one of the greatest pleasures of my life to inscribe your name on this dedicatory page, and to subscribe myself,*

*Your sincere friend and grateful patient,*

*J. Maclaren Cobban.*

*London, November, 1889.*

# MASTER OF HIS FATE.

## CHAPTER I.

### JULIUS COURTNEY.

The Hyacinth Club has the reputation of selecting its members from among the freshest and most active spirits in literature, science, and art. That is in a sense true, but activity in one or another of those fields is not a condition of membership; for, just as the listening Boswell was the necessary complement of the talking Johnson, so in the Hyacinth Club there is an indispensable contingent of passive members who find their liveliest satisfaction in hearing and looking on, rather than in speaking and doing. Something of the home principle of male

and female is necessary for the completeness even of a club.

The Hyacinth Club-house looks upon Piccadilly and the Green Park. The favorite place of concourse of its members is the magnificent smoking-room on the first floor, the bow-windows of which command a view up and down the fashionable thoroughfare, and over the trees and the undulating sward of the Park to the gates of Buckingham Palace. On a Monday afternoon in the beginning of May, the bow-windows were open, and several men sat in leather lounges (while one leaned against a window-sash) luxuriously smoking, and noting the warm, palpitating life of the world without. A storm which had been silently and doubtfully glooming and gathering the night before had burst and poured in the morning, and it was such a spring afternoon as thrills the heart with new life and suffuses the soul with expectation—such an afternoon as makes all women appear beautiful and all men handsome. The south-west wind blew soft and balmy, and all nature rejoiced as the bride in the presence

of the bride-groom. The trees in the Park were full of sap, and their lusty buds were eagerly opening to the air and the light. The robin sang with a note almost as rich and sensuous as that of the thrush; and the shrill and restless sparrows chirped and chattered about the houses and among the horses' feet, and were as full of the joy of life as the men and women who thronged the pavements or reclined in their carriages in the sumptuous ease of wealth and beauty.

Of the men who languidly gazed upon the gay and splendid scene from the windows of the Club, none seemed so interested as the man who leaned against the window-frame. He appeared more than interested—absorbed, indeed—in the world without, and he looked bright and handsome enough, and charged enough with buoyant health, to be the ideal bridegroom of Nature in her springtide.

He was a dark man, tall and well built, with clear brown eyes. His black hair (which was not cropped short, as is the fashion) had a lustrous softness, and at the same time an elastic

bushiness, which nothing but the finest-tempered health can give; and his complexion, though tanned by exposure, had yet much of the smoothness of youth, save where the razor had passed upon his beard. Thus seen, a little way off, he appeared a young man in his rosy twenties; on closer view and acquaintance, however, that superficial impression was contradicted by the set expression of his mouth and the calm observation and understanding of his eye, which spoke of ripe experience rather than of green hope. He bore a very good English name—Courtney; and he was believed to be rich. There was no member of whom the Hyacinth Club was prouder than of him: though he had done nothing, it was commonly believed he could do anything he chose. No other was listened to with such attention, and there was nothing on which he could not throw a fresh and fascinating light. He was a constant spring of surprise and interest. While others were striving after income and reputation, he calmly and modestly, without obtrusion or upbraiding, held on his own way, with un-

surpassable curiosity, to the discovery of all which life might have to reveal. It was this, perhaps, as much as the charm of his manner and conversation, that made him so universal a favorite; for how could envy or malice touch a man who competed at no point with his fellows?

His immediate neighbors, as he thus stood by the window, were a pair of journalists, several scientific men, and an artist.

"Have you seen any of the picture-shows, Julius?" asked the painter, Kew.

Courtney slowly abstracted his gaze from without, and turned on his shoulder with the lazy, languid grace of a cat.

"No," said he, in a half-absent tone; I have just come up, and I've not thought of looking into picture-galleries yet."

"Been in the country?" asked Kew.

"Yes, I've been in the country," said Courtney, still as if his attention was elsewhere.

"It must be looking lovely," said Kew.

"It is—exquisite!" said Courtney, waking up at length to a full glow of interest. "That's

why I don't want to go and stare at pictures. In the spring, to see the fresh, virginal, delicious green of a bush against an old dry brick wall, gives a keener pleasure than the best picture that ever was painted."

"I thought," said Kew, "you had a taste for Art; I thought you enjoyed it."

"So I do, my dear fellow, but not now,—not at this particular present. When I feel the warm sun on my back and breathe the soft air, I want no more; they are more than Art can give —they are nature, and, of course, it goes without saying that Art can never compete with nature in creating human pleasure. I mean no disparagement of your work, Kew, or any artist's work; but I can't endure Art except in winter when everything (almost) must be artificial to be endurable. A winter may come in one's life— I wonder if it will?—when one would rather look at the picture of a woman than at the woman herself. Meantime I no more need pictures than I need fires; I warm both hands and heart at the fire of life."

"Ah!" said Kew, with a wistful lack of comprehension.

"That's why I believe," said Courtney, with a sudden turn of reflection, "there is in warm countries no Art of our small domestic kind."

"Just so," said Kew; while Dingley Dell, the Art critic, made a note of Courtney's words.

"Look here!" exclaimed Dr. Embro, an old scientific man of Scottish extraction, who, in impatience with such transcendental talk, had taken up 'The St. James's Gazette.' "What do you make of this queer case at the Hotel-Dieu in Paris? I see it's taken from 'The Daily Telegraph;'" and he began to read it.

"Oh," said Kew, "we all read that this morning."

"Dr. Embro," said Courtney, again looking idly out of window, "is like a French journal: full of the news of the day before yesterday."

"Have you read it yourself, Julius?" asked Embro, amid the laughter of his neighbors.

"No," said Julius, carelessly; "and if it's a hospital case I don't want to read it."

"What!" said Embro, with heavy irony. "You say that? You, a pupil of the great Dubois and the greater Charbon! But here comes a greater than Charbon—the celebrated Dr. Lefevre himself. Come now, Lefevre, you tell us what you think of this Paris hospital case."

"Presently, Embro," said Lefevre, who had just perceived his friend Courtney. "Ha, Julius!" said he, crossing to him and taking his hand; "you're looking uncommonly well."

"Yes," said Julius, "I am well.'

"And where have you been all this while?" asked the doctor.

"Oh," said Julius, turning his gaze again out of window, "I have been rambling everywhere, between Dan and Beersheba."

"And all is vanity, eh?" said the doctor.

"Well," said Julius, looking at him, "that depends—that very much depends. But can there be any question of vanity or vexation in this sweet, glorious sunshine?" and he stretched out his hands as if he burgeoned forth to welcome it.

"Perhaps not," said Lefebvre. "Come and sit down and let us talk."

They were retiring from the window when Embro's voice again sounded at Lefevre's elbow —"Come now, Lefevre; what's the meaning of that Paris case?"

"What Paris case?"

Embro answered by handing him the paper. He took it, and read as follows:

"About a month ago a strange case of complete mental collapse was received into the Hotel-Dieu. A fresh healthy girl, of the working class, about twenty years of age, and comfortably dressed, presented herself at a police-station near the Odeon and asked for shelter. As she did not appear to be in full possession of her mental faculties, she was sent to the Hotel-Dieu, where she remained in a semi-comatose condition. Her memory did not go farther back than the hour of her application at the police-station. She was entirely ignorant of her previous history, and had even forgotten her name. The minds of the medical staff of the Hotel-Dieu were very much exercised with her condition; but it was not till about a week ago that they succeeded in restoring to any extent her mental consciousness and her memory. She then remembered the events immediately preceding her application to the police. It had come on to rain, she said, and she was hurrying along to escape from it, when a gentleman in a cloak came to her side and politely offered to give her the

shelter of his umbrella. She accepted; the gentleman seemed old and ill. He asked her to take his arm. She did so, and very soon she felt as if her strength had gone from her; a cold shiver crept over her; she trembled and tottered; but with all that she did not find her sensations disagreeable exactly or alarming; so little so, indeed, that she never thought of letting go the gentleman's arm. Her head buzzed, and a kind of darkness came over her. Then all seemed to clear, and she found herself alone near the police-station, remembering nothing. Being asked to further describe the gentleman, she said he was tall and dark, with a pleasant voice and wonderful eyes, that made you feel you must do whatever he wished. The police have made inquiries, but after such a lapse of time it is not surprising that no trace of him can be found.

"Well?" asked Embro, when Lefevre had raised his eyes from the paper. "What do you think of it?"

"Curious," said Lefevre, "I can't say more, since I know nothing of it but this. Have you read it, Julius?"

"No," said Julius; "I hate what people call news; and when I take up a paper, it's only to look at the Weather Forecasts." Lefevre handed him the paper, which he took with an unconcealed look of repulsion. "If it's some

case of disease," said he, "it will make me ill."

"Oh, no," said Lefevre; "it's not painful, but it's curious;" and so Julius set himself to read it.

"But come," said Embro, posing the question with his forefinger; "do you believe that story, Lefevre?"

"Though it's French, and from the 'Telegraph,'" said Lefevre, "I see no reason to disbelieve it."

"Come," said Embro, "come—you're shirking the question."

"I confess," said Lefevre, "I've no desire to discuss it. You think me prejudiced in favor of anything of the kind; perhaps I think you prejudiced against it: where, then, is the good of discussion?"

"Well, now," said the unabashed Embro, "I'll tell you what I think. Here's a story"—Julius at that instant handed back the paper to him—"of a healthy young woman mesmerized, hypnotized, or somnambulized, or whatever you like to call it, in the public street, by some man that casually comes up to her, and

her brain so affected that her memory goes! I say it's inconceivable!—impossible!" And he slapped the paper down on the table.

The others looked on with grim satisfaction at the prospect of an argument between the two representatives of rival schools; and it was noteworthy that, as they looked, they turned a referring glance on Courtney, as if it were a foregone conclusion that he must be the final arbiter. He, however, sat abstracted, with his eyes on the floor, and with one hand propping his chin and the other drumming on the arm of his chair.

"I'm not a scientific man," said the journalist who was not an Art critic, "and I am not prejudiced either way about this story; but it seems to me, Embro, that you view the thing through a very ordinary fallacy, and make a double mistake. You confound the relatively inconceivable with the absolutely impossible: this story is relatively inconceivable to you, and therefore you say it is absolutely impossible."

"Is there such a thing as an absolute impos-

sibility?" murmured Julius, who still sat with his chin in his hand, looking as if he considered the "thing" from a long way off as one of a multitude of other things.

"I do not believe there is," said the journalist; "but——"

"Don't let us lose ourselves in metaphysics," broke in Embro. Then turning to Courtney, whose direct intelligent gaze seemed to disconcert him, he said, "now, Julius, you've seen, I daresay, a good many things we have not seen, —have you ever seen or known a case like this we're talking about?"

"I can't say I have," said Julius.

"There you are!" quoth Embro, in triumph.

"But," continued Julius, "I don't therefore nail that case down as false."

"Do you mean to say," exclaimed Embro, "that you have lived all your years, and studied science at the Salpetriere,—or what they call science there,—and studied and seen God knows what else besides, and you can't pronounce an opinion from all you know on a case of this sort?"

"Oh yes," said Julius quietly, "I can pronounce an opinion; but what's the use of that? I think that case is true, but I don't know that it is; and therefore I can't argue about it, for argument should come from knowledge, and I have none. I have a few opinions, and I am always ready to receive impressions; but, besides some schoolboy facts that are common property, the only thing I know—I am certain of—is, as some man says, '*Life's a dream worth dreaming.*'"

"You're too high-falutin for me, Julius," said Embro, shaking his head. "But my opinion, founded on my knowledge, is that this story is a hallucination of the young woman's noddle!"

"And how much, Embro," laughed Julius, rising to leave the circle, "is the argument advanced by your ticketing the case with that long word?"

"To say 'hallucination,'" quoth Lefevre, "is a convenient way of giving inquiry the slip."

"My dear Embro," said Julius,—and he spoke with an emphasis, and looked down on Embro with a bright vivacity of eye which fore-

warned the circle of one of his eloquent flashes; a smile of expectant enjoyment passed round, —"hallucination is the dust-heap and limbo of the meanly-equipped man of science to-day, just as witchcraft was a few hundred years ago. The poor creature of science long ago, when he came upon any pathological or psychological manifestation he did not understand, used to say, '*Witchcraft!* Away with it to the limbo!' To-day he says, '*Hallucination!* Away with it to the dust-heap!' It is a pity," said he, with a laugh, "you ever took to science, Embro."

"And why, may I ask?" said Embro.

"Oh, you'd have been great as an orthodox theologian of the Kirk; the cock-sureness of theology would have suited you like your own coat. You are not at home in science, for you have no imagination."

It was characteristic of the peculiar regard in which Julius was held that whatever he said or did appeared natural and pleasant,—like the innocent actions and the simple, truthful speech of a child. Not even Embro was offended

with these last words of his; the others laughed; Embro smiled, though with a certain sourness.

"Pooh, Julius!" said he; "what are you talking about? Science is the examination of facts, and what has imagination to do with that? Reason, sir, is what you want!"

"My dear Embro," said Julius, "there are several kinds of facts. There are, for instance, big facts and little facts,—clean facts and dirty facts. Imagination raises you and gives you a high and comprehensive view of them all; your mere reason keeps you down in some noisome corner, like the man with the muck-rake."

"Hear, hear!" cried the journalist and the artist heartily.

"You're wrong, Julius," said Embro,—"quite wrong. Keep your imagination for painting and poetry. In science it just leads you the devil's own dance, and fills you with delusions."

Julius paused, and bent on him his peculiar look, which made a man feel he was being seen through and through.

"I am surprised, Embro," said he, "that one can live all your years and not find that the illusions of life are its best part. If you leave me the illusions, I'll give you all the realities. But how can we stay babbling and quibbling here all this delicious afternoon? I must go out and see green things and beasts. Come with me, Lefevre, to the Zoological Gardens; it will do you good."

"I tell you what," said Lefevre, looking at the clock as they moved away; "my mother and sister will call for me with the carriage in less than half an hour; come with us for a drive."

"Oh, yes," said Julius; "that's a good idea."

"And I," said Lefevre, "must have a cup of tea in the meantime. Come and sit down, and tell me where you have been."

But when they had sat down, Julius was little inclined to divagate into an account of his travels. His glance swept round and noted everything; he remarked on a soft effect of a shaft of sunshine that lit up the small conservatory, and burnished the green of a certain

plant; he perceived a fine black Persian cat, the latest pet of the club, and exclaimed, "What a beautiful, superb creature!" He called it, and it came, daintily sniffed at his leg, and leaped on his lap, where he stroked and fondled it. And all the while he continued to discuss illusion, while Lefevre poured and drank tea (tea which Julius would not share: tea, he said, did not agree with him).

"It bothers me," he said, "to imagine how a man like Embro gets any satisfaction out of life, for ever mumbling the bare dry bones of science. Such a life as his might as well be passed in the receiver of an air-pump."

"Still the old Julius!" said the doctor, with a smile. "Still dreaming and wandering, interested in everything, but having nothing to do!"

"Nothing to do, my dear fellow?" said Julius. "I've all the world to enjoy!" and he buried his cheek in the soft fur of the cat.

"A purpose in life, however," said Lefevre, "gives an extraordinary zest to all enjoyment."

"To live," said Julius, "is surely the purpose

of life. Any smaller, any more obvious purpose, will spoil life, just as it spoils Art."

"I believe, my boy, you are wrong in both," said Lefevre. "Art without a purpose goes off into all sorts of madness and extravagance, and so does life."

"You really think so?" said Julius, his attention fixed for an instant, and looking as if he had set up the point and regarded it at a distance. "Yes; perhaps it does." But the next moment his attention seemed given to the cat; he fondled it, and talked to it soothingly.

"I am sure of it," said Lefevre. "Just listen to me, Julius. You have wonderful intelligence and penetration in everything. You are fond of science; science needs men like you more than the dull plodders that usually take to it. When you were in Charbon's class you were his favorite and his best pupil,—don't I remember?—and if you liked you could be the greatest physician of the age."

"It is treason to yourself to say such a thing."

"Your fame would soon eclipse mine."

"Fame! fame!" exclaimed Julius, for an instant showing irritation. "I would not give a penny-piece for fame if all the magicians of the East came crying it down the streets! Why should I seek fame? What good would it do me if I had it?"

"Well, well," said Lefevre; "let fame alone: you might be as unknown as you like, and do a world of good in practice among the poor."

Julius looked at him, and set the cat down.

"My dear Lefevre," said he, "I did not think you could urge such common twaddle! You know well enough,—nobody knows better, first of all, that there are already more men waiting to do that kind of thing than can find occupation: why should I go down among them and try to take their work? And you know, in the next place, that medical philanthropy, like all other philanthropy, is so overdone that the race is fast deteriorating; we strive with so much success to keep the sickly and the diseased alive, that perfect health is scarcely known. Life without health can be

nothing but a weariness: why should it be reckoned a praiseworthy thing to keep it going at any price? If life became a burden to me, I should lay it down."

"But," said Lefevre, earnestly, "your life surely is not your own to do with it what you like!"

"In the name of truth, Lefevre," answered Julius, "if my life is not my own, what is? I get its elements from others, but I fashion it myself, just as much as the sculptor shapes his statue, or the poet turns his poem. You don't deny to the sculptor the right to smash his statue if it does not please him, nor to the poet the right to burn his manuscript;—why should you deny me the right to dispose of my life? I know—I know," said he, seeing Lefevre open his mouth and raise his hand for another observation, "that your opinion is the common one, but that is the only sanction it has; it has the sanction neither of true morality nor of true religion! But here is the waiter to tell you the carriage is come. I'm glad. Let us get out into the air and the sunshine."

The carriage was the doctor's own; his mother, although the widow of a Court physician, was too poor to maintain much equipage, but she made what use she pleased of her son's possessions. When Lady Lefevre saw Julius at the carriage-door, she broke into smiles and cries of welcome.

"Where have you been this long, long while, Julius?" said she. "This is Julius Courtney, Nora. You remember Nora, Julius, when she was a little girl in frocks?"

"She now wears remarkable gowns," chimed in the doctor.

"Which," said Julius, "I have no doubt are becoming."

"My brother," said Nora, with a sunny smile, "is jealous; because, being a doctor, he must wear only dowdy clothes of dingy colors."

"We have finished at school and college, and been presented at Court," laughed Lady Lefevre.

"And," broke in the brother, "we have had cards engraved with our full name, *Leonora*,"

"With all this," said Lady Lefevre, "I hope you won't be afraid of us."

"I see no reason," said Julius. "For, if I may say so, I like everything in Nature, and it seems to me Nature has had more to do with the finishing you speak of than the schoolmistress or the college professor."

"There he is already," laughed Lady Lefevre, "with his equivocal compliments. I shouldn't wonder if he says that, my dear, because you have not yet had more than a word to say for yourself."

By that time Lefevre and Julius were seated, and the carriage was rolling along towards the Park. Julius sat immediately opposite Lady Lefevre, but he included both her and Nora in his talk and his bright glances. The doctor sat agreeably suffused with delight and wonder. No one, as has been seen, had a higher opinion of Courtney's rare powers, or had had more various evidence of them, than Lefevre, but even he had never known his friend so brilliant. He was instinct with life and eloquence. His face shone as with an inner light, and his

talk was bright, searching, and ironical. The amazing thing, however, was that Julius had as stimulating and intoxicating an influence on Nora as, it was clear, Nora had on him. His sister had not appeared to Lefevre hitherto more than a beautiful, healthy, shy girl of tolerable intelligence; now she showed that she had brilliance and wit, and, moreover, that she understood Julius as one native of a strange realm understands another. When they entered the Park, they were the observed of all. And, indeed, Leonora Lefevre was a vision to excite the worship of those least inclined to idolatry of Nature. She was of the noblest type of English beauty, and she seemed as calmly unconscious of its excellence and rarity as one of the grand Greek women of the Parthenon. She had, however, a sensuous fulness and bloom, a queenly carriage of head and neck, a clearness of feature, and a liquid kindness of eye that suggested a deep potentiality of passion.

They drove round the Row, and round again, and they talked and laughed their fill of

wisdom and frivolity and folly. To be foolish wisely and gracefully is a rare attainment. When they had almost completed their third round, Julius (who had finished a marvellous story of a fairy princess and a cat) said, "I can see you are fond of beasts, Miss Lefevre. I should like to take you to the Zoological Gardens and show you my favorites there. May we go now, Lady Lefevre?"

"By all means," said Lady Lefevre, "let us go. What do you say, John?"

"Oh, wherever you like, mother," answered her son.

Arrived in the Gardens, Julius took possession of his companions, and exerted all his arts to charm and fascinate. He led the ladies from cage to cage, from enclosure to enclosure, showed himself as familiar with the characters and habits of their wild denizens as a farmer is with those of his stock; and they responded to his strange calls, to his gentleness and fearlessness, with an alert understanding and confidence beautiful to see. His favorites were certain creatures of the deer species, which

crowded to their fences to sniff his clothes, and to lick his hands, which he abandoned to their caresses with manifest satisfaction. His example encouraged the queenly Nora and her sprightly mother to feed the beautiful creatures with bread and buns, and to feel the suffusion of pleasure derived from the contact of their soft lips with the palm of the hand. After that they were scarcely astonished when, without bravado, but clearly with simple confidence and enjoyment, Julius put his hand within the bars of the lion's cage and scratched the ears of a lioness, murmuring the while in a strange tongue such fond sounds as only those use who are on the best terms with animals. The great brute rose to his touch, closing its eyes, and bearing up its head like a cat.

Then came an incident that deeply impressed the Lefevres. Julius went to a cage in which, he said, there was a recent arrival—a leopard from the "Land of the Setting Sun," the romantic land of the Moors. The creature crouched sulking in the back of the cage. Julius tapped on the bars, and entreated her in the language

of her native land, "Ya, dudu! ya, lellatsi!" She bounded to him with a "*wir-r-r*" of delight, leaned and rubbed herself against the bars, and gave herself up to be stroked and fondled. When he left her, she cried after him piteously, and wistfully watched him out of sight.

"Do you know the beautiful creature?" asked Lady Lefevre.

"Yes," answered Julius quietly; "I brought her over some months ago."

Lefevre had explained to his mother that Julius had always been on friendly or fond terms with animals, but never till now had he seen the remarkable understanding he clearly maintained with them.

"Look!" said Lady Lefevre to her son as they turned to leave the Gardens. "He seems to have fascinated Nora as much as the beasts."

Nora stood a little aloof, regarding Julius in an ecstasy of admiration. When she found her mother was looking at her, her eyes sank, and as it were a veil of blushes fell over her. Mother and son walked on first, and Julius followed with Nora.

"He is a most charming and extraordinary man," said the mother.

"He is," said the son, "and amazingly intelligent."

"He seems to know everything, and to have been everywhere,—to have been a kind of rolling stone. If anything should come of this, I suppose he can afford to marry. You ought to know about him."

"I believe I know as much as any one."

"He has no profession?" queried the old lady.

"He has no profession; but I suppose he could afford it," said Lefevre musingly.

"You don't like the idea," said his mother.

"Not much. I scarce know why. But I somehow think of him as not having enough sense of the responsibility of life."

"I suppose his people are of the right sort?"

"I suppose they are; though I don't know if he has any people," said he, with a laugh, "He is the kind of man who does not need parents or relations."

"Still, hadn't you better try to find out what he may have in that line?"

"Yes," said Lefevre; "perhaps I had."

## CHAPTER II.

### A MYSTERIOUS CASE.

THE two friends returned, as they had arranged, to the Hyacinth Club for dinner. Courtney's coruscating brilliancy sank into almost total darkness when they parted from Lady and Miss Lefevre, and when they sat down to table he was preoccupied and silent, yet in no proper sense downcast or dull. Lefevre noted, while they ate, that there was clear speculation in his eye, that he was not vaguely dreaming, but with alert intelligence examining some question, or facing some contingency; and it was natural he should think that the question or contingency must concern Nora as much as Julius. Yet he made no overture of understanding, for he knew that Courtney seldom offered confidence or desired sympathy; not that he was churlish or re-

served, but simply that he was usually sufficient unto himself, both for counsel and for consolation. Lefevre was therefore surprised when he was suddenly asked a question, which was without context in his own thought.

"Have you ever found something happen or appear," said Julius, "that completely upsets your point of view, and tumbles down your scheme of life, like a stick thrust between your legs when you are running?"

"I have known," said Lefevre, "a new fact arise and upset a whole scientific theory. That's often a good thing," he added, with a pointed glance; "for it compels a reconstruction of the theory on a wider and sounder basis."

"Yes," murmured Julius; "that may be. But I should think it does not often happen that the new fact swallows up all the details that supported your theory,—as Aaron's rod, turned into a serpent, swallowed up the serpent-rods of the magicians of Egypt,—so that there is no longer any theory, but only one great, glorious fact. I do admire," he ex-

claimed, swerving suddenly, "the imagination of those old Greeks, with their beautiful, half-divine personifications of the Spirits of Air and Earth and Sea! But their imagination never conceived a goddess that embodied them all!"

"I have often thought, Julius," said Lefevre, "that you must be some such embodiment yourself; for you are not quite human, you know."

The doctor said that with a clear recollection of his mother's request. He hoped that his friend would take the cue, and tell him something of his family. Julius, however, said nothing but "Indeed." Lefevre then tried to tempt him into confession by talking about his own father and mother, and by relating how the French name "Lefevre" came to be domiciled in England; but Julius ignored the temptation, and dismissed the question in an eloquent flourish.

"What does a man want with a family and a name? They only tie him to the earth, as Gulliver was tied by the people of Lilliput. We have life and health,—*if* we have them,—and

it is only veiled prurience to inquire whence we got them. A man can't help having a father and a mother, I suppose; but he need not be always reminding himself of the fact; no other creature on earth does. For myself, I wish I were like that extraordinary person, Melchizedek, without father and without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life."

In a little while the friends parted. Lefevre said he had work to do, but he did not anticipate such work as he had to turn to that night. Though the doctor was a bachelor, he had a professional residence apart from his mother and sister. They lived in a small house in Curzon Street; he dwelt in Savile Row. Savile Row was a place of consequence long before Regent Street was thought of, but now they are few who know of its existence. Fashion ignores it. It is tenanted by small clubs, learned societies, and doctors. It slumbers in genteel decorum, with its back to the garish modern thoroughfare. It is always quiet, but by nine o'clock of a dark evening it is deserted

When Dr. Lefevre, therefore, stepped out of his hired hansom, and prepared to put his latch-key in his own door, he was arrested by a hoarse-voiced hawker of evening news bursting in upon the repose of the Row with a continuous roar of "Special—Mystery—Paper—Railways—Special—Brighton—Paper—Victoria—Special!" It was with some effort, and only when the man was close at hand, that he interpreted the sounds into these words.

"Paper, sir," said the man; and he bought it and went in. He entered his dining-room and read the following paragraph:—

"A Mysterious Case.

"A report has reached us that a young man, about two or four and twenty years of age, whose name is at present unknown, was found yesterday (Sunday) to all appearance dead in a first-class carriage of the 5 P. M. train from Brighton to Victoria. The discovery was only made at Grosvenor Road Station, where tickets are taken before entering Victoria. At Victoria the body was searched for purposes of identification, and there was found upon him a card with the following remarkable inscription:—"*I am not dead. Take me to the St. James's Hospital.*" To St. James's Hospital, accordingly, the young man was conveyed. It seems

probable he is in a condition of trance—not for the first time—since he was provided with the card, and knew the hospital with which is associated in all men's minds the name of Dr. Lefevre, who is so famous for his skill in the treatment of nervous disorders."

In matters of plain duty Dr. Lefevre had got into the excellent habit of acting first and thinking afterwards. He at once rang the bell, and ordered the responsible serving-man. who appeared to call a cab. The man went to the door and sounded his shrill whistle, grateful to the ears of several loitering cabbies. There was a mad race of growlers and hansoms for the open door. Dr. Lefevre got into the first hansom that drew up, and drove off to the hospital. By that time he had told himself that the young man must be a former patient of his (though he did not remember any such), and that he ought to see him at once, although it is not customary for the visiting physician of a hospital to appear, except between fixed hours of certain days. He made nothing of the mystery which the newspaper wished, after the manner of its kind, to cast about the case, and thought of other things, while he smoked

cigarettes, till he reached the hospital. The house-physician was somewhat surprised by his appearance.

"I have just read that paragraph," said Lefevre, handing him the paper.

"Oh yes, sir," said the house-physician. "The man was brought in last night. Dr. Dowling" [the resident assistant-physician] "saw him, and thought it a case of ordinary trance, that could easily wait till you came, as usual, to-morrow."

"Ah, well," said Lefevre, "let me see him."

Seen thus, the physician appeared a different person from the cheerful, modest man of the Hyacinth Club. He had now put on the responsibility of men's health and the enthusiasm of his profession. He seemed to swell in proportions and dignity, though his eye still beamed with a calm and kindly light.

The young man led the way down the echoing flagged passage, and up the flight of stone stairs. As they went they encountered many silent female figures, clean and white, going up or down (it was the time of changing

nurses), so that a fanciful stranger might well have thought of the stairway reaching from earth to heaven, on which the angels of God were seen ascending and descending. A stranger, too, would have noted the peculiar odors that hung about the stairs and passages, as if the ghosts of medicines escaped from the chemist's bottles were hovering in the air. Opening first an outer and then an inner door, Lefevre and his companion entered a large and lofty ward. The room was dark, save for the light of the fire and of a shaded lamp, by which, within a screen, the night-nurse sat conning her list of night-duties. The evening was just beginning out of doors,—shop-fronts were flaring, taverns were becoming noisy, and brilliantly-lit theatres and music-halls were settling down to business,—but here night and darkness had set in more than an hour before. Indeed, in these beds of languishing, which stretched away down either side of the ward, night was hardly to be distinguished from day, save for the sunlight and the occasional excitement of the doctor's visit; and many there

were who cried to themselves in the morning, "Would God it were evening!" and in the evening, "Would God it were morning!" But there was yet this other difference, that disease and doctor, fear and hope, gossip and grumbling, newspaper and Bible and tract, were all forgotten in the night, for some time at least, and Nature's kind restorer, sleep, went softly round among the beds and soothed the weary spirits into peace.

Lefevre and the house-physician passed silently up the ward between the rows of silent blue-quilted beds, while the nurse came silently to meet them with her lamp. Lefevre turned aside a moment to look at a man whose breathing was labored and stertorous. The shaded light was turned upon him: an opiate had been given him to induce sleep; it had performed its function, but, as if resenting its bondage, it was impishly twitching the man's muscles and catching him by the throat, so that he choked and started. Dr. Lefevre raised the man's eyelid to look at his eye: the upturned eye stared out upon him, but the man

slept on. He put his hand on the man's forehead (he had a beautiful hand—the hand of a born surgeon and healer—fine but firm, the expression of nervous force), and with thumb and finger stroked first his temples and then his neck. The spasmodic twitching ceased, and his breath came easy and regular. The house-doctor and the nurse looked at each other in admiration of this subtle skill, while Lefevre turned away and passed on.

"Where is the man?" said he.

"Number Thirteen," answered the house-doctor, leading the way.

The lamp was set on the locker beside the bed of Thirteen, screens were placed round to create a seclusion amid the living, breathing silence of the ward, and Lefevre proceeded to examine the unconscious patient who had so strangely put himself in his hands.

He was young and well-favored, and, it was evident from the firmness of his flesh, well-fed. Lefevre considered his features a moment, shook his head, and murmured, "No; I don't think I've seen him before." He turned to the

nurse and inquired concerning the young man's clothes: they were evidently those of a gentleman, she said,—of one, at least, who had plenty of money. He turned again to the young man He raised the left arm to feel the heart, but, contrary to his experience in such cases, the arm did not remain as he bent it, nor did the eyes open in obedience to the summons of the disturbed nerves. The breathing was scarcely perceptible, and the beating of the heart was faint.

"A strange case," said Lefevre in a low voice to his young comrade—"the strangest I've seen. He does not look a subject for this kind of thing, and yet he is in the extreme stage of hypnotism. You see." And the doctor, by sundry tests and applications, showed the peculiar exhausted and contractive condition of the muscles. "It is very curious."

"Perhaps," said the other, "he has been——" and he hesitated.

"Been what?" asked Lefevre, turning on him his keen look.

"Enjoying himself."

"Having a debauch, you mean? No; I think not. There would then have probably been some reflex action of the nerves. This is not that kind of exhaustion; and it is more than mere trance or catalepsy; it seems the extremest suspensory condition,—and that in a young man of such apparent health is very remarkable. It will take a long time for him to recover in the ordinary way with food and sleep," he continued, rather to himself than to his subordinates. "He needs rousing,—a strong stimulant."

"Shall I get some brandy, sir?" asked the nurse.

"Brandy? No. That's not the stimulant he needs."

He was silent for a little, moving the young man's limbs, and touching certain muscles which his exact anatomical knowledge taught him to lay his finger on with unerring accuracy. The effect was startling and grotesque. As a galvanic current applied to the proper nerves and muscles of a dead body will produce expressions and actions resembling those of life,

so the touch of Lefevre's finger made the unconscious young man scowl or smile or clench his fist according to the muscles impressed.

"The brain," said Lefevre, "seems quite sound,—perfectly passive, you see, but active in its passivity. You can leave us, nurse," said he; then, turning to the house-physician, he continued: "I am convinced this is such a peculiar case as I have often imagined, but have never seen. This nervous-muscular suspension is complicated with some exhaustive influence. I want your assistance, and I ask for it like this, because it is necessary for my purpose that you should give it freely and without reserve; I am going to try the electrode."

This was a simple machine contrived by Lefevre, on the model of the electric cylinder of Du Bois-Reymond, and worked on the theory that the electricity stored in the human body can be driven out by the human will along a prepared channel into another human body.

"I understand," said the assistant promptly.

He apprehended his chief's meaning more fully than the reader can; for he was deeply interested and fairly skilled in that strange annex of modern medical science which his chief called psycho-dynamics, and which old-fashioned practitioners decline to recognize.

"Get me the machine and the insulating sheet," said Lefevre.

While his assistant was gone on his errand, Lefevre with his right hand gently stroked along the main lines of nerve and muscle in the upper part of his patient's body; and it was strange to note how the features and limbs lost a certain constriction and rigidity which it was manifest they had had only by their disappearance. When the house-physician returned, the sheet (a preparation of spun-glass invented by Lefevre) was drawn under the patient, and the machine, with its vessels of chemical mixture and its conducting wires, was placed close to the bed. The handles attached to the wires were put into the patient's hands.

"Now," said Lefevre, "this is a trying experiment. Give me your hand—your left; you

know how to do; yes, the other hand on the machine, with the fingers touching the chemicals. When you feel strength —virtue, so to say—going out of you, don't be alarmed: let it go; use no effort of the will to keep it back, or we shall probably fail."

"I understand," repeated the assistant.

Then, holding his hand,—closely, but not so as to constrain the muscles,—Lefevre put his own left on the machine according to the direction he had given his assistant,—with his fingers, that is, dipping into the chemicals from plates in the bottom of which the wires conducted to the patient's hands. A shiver ran through the frame of both Lefevre and his companion, a convulsive shudder passed upon the unconscious body, and—a strange cry rang out upon the silence of the ward, and Lefevre withdrew his hands. He and the house-physician looked at each other pale and shaken. The nurse came running at the cry. Lefevre looked out beyond the screen to reassure her, and saw in the dim red reflection of the firelight a sight which struck him gruesomely,

used though he was to hospital sights; all about the ward pale scared figures were sitting up in bed, like corpses suddenly raised from the dead. He bent over his patient, who presently opened his eyes and stared at him.

"Get some brandy and milk," said Lefevre to his companion.

"Who? Where am I?" murmured the patient in a faint voice.

"I am Dr. Lefevre, and this is St. James's hospital."

"Doctor?—hospital?—oh, I'm dreaming!" murmured the patient.

"We'll talk about that when you have taken some of this," said Lefevre, as the house-physician reappeared with the nurse, bearing the brandy and milk.

Lefevre presently told him how he had been found in the train, and taken for dead till the card—"this card," said he, taking it from the top of the locker—was discovered on him. The young man listened in open amazement, and looked at the card.

"I know nothing of this!" said he. "I

never saw the card before! I never heard your name or the hospital's till a minute ago."

"Your case was strange before," said Lefevre; "this makes it stranger. Who journeyed with you?"

"A man,—a nice, strange, oldish fellow in a fur coat." And the young man wished to enter upon a narrative, when the doctor interrupted him.

"You're not well enough to talk much now. Tell me to-morrow all about it."

The doctor returned home, his imagination occupied with the vision of a train rushing at express speed over the metals, and of a compartment in the train in which a young man reclined under the spell of an old man. The young man's face he saw clearly, but the old man's evaded him like a dream, and yet he felt he ought to know one who knew the peculiar repute of the St. James's Hospital.

Next day the young man told his story, which was in effect as follows: He was a subaltern in a dragoon regiment stationed in Brighton. On Sunday afternoon he had set out for

London on several days' leave. He had taken a seat in a smoking-carriage, and was preparing to make himself comfortable with a novel and a cigar, when an elderly gentleman, who looked like a foreigner, came in as the train was about to move. He particularly observed the man from the first, because, though it was a pleasant spring day, he looked pinched and shrunken with cold in his great fur overcoat, and because he had remarked him standing on the platform and scrutinizing the passengers hurrying into the train. The gentleman sat down in the seat opposite the young officer, and drew his fur wrap close about him. The young officer could not keep his eyes off him, and he noted that his features seemed worn, thin and arid, as by passage through terrific peril,—as if he had been travelling for many days without sleep and without food, straining forward to a goal of safety, sick both in stomach and heart, —as if he had been rushing, like the maniac of the Gospel, through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. His hair, which should have been black, looked lustreless and bleached, and

his skin seemed as if his blood had lost all color and generosity, as if nothing but serum flowed in his veins. His eyes alone did not look bloodless; they were weary and extravasated, as from anxious watching. The young officer's compassion went out to the stranger; for he thought he must be a conspirator, fleeing probably from the infamous tyranny of Russian rule. But presently he spoke in such good English that the idea of his being a Russian faded away.

"Excuse the liberty I take," said he, with a singularly winning smile; "but let me advise you not to smoke that cigar. I have a peculiarly sensitive nose for tobacco, and my nose informs me that your cigar, though good as cigars go, is not fit for you to smoke."

The young officer was surprised that he was rather charmed than offended by this impertinence.

"Let me offer you one of these instead," said the strange gentleman; "we call them—I won't trouble you with the Spanish name—but in English it means 'Joys of Spain.'"

The officer took and thanked him for a "Joy of Spain," and found the flavor and aroma so excellent that, to use his own phrase, he could have eaten it. He asked the stranger what in particular was his objection to the other cigar.

"This objection," said he, "which is common to all ill-prepared tobaccos, that it lowers the vital force. You don't feel that yet, because you are young and healthy, and gifted with a superabundance of fine vitality; but you may by smoking one bad cigar bring the time a day nearer when you must feel it. And even now it would take a little off the keen edge of the appetite for pleasure. How little," said he, "do we understand how to keep ourselves in condition for the complete enjoyment of life! You, I suppose, are about to take your pleasure in town, and instead of judiciously tickling and stimulating your nerves for the complete fulfilment of the pleasures you contemplate, you begin—you were beginning, I mean, with your own cigar—to dull and stupefy them. Don't you see how foolish that is?"

The young officer admitted that it was very

foolish and very true; and they talked on thus, the elder exercising a charm over the younger such as he had never known before in the society of any man. In a quarter of an hour the young man felt as if he had known and trusted and loved his neighbor all his life; he felt, he confessed, so strongly attracted that he could have hugged him. He told him about his family, and showed him the innermost secrets of his heart; and all the while he smoked the delicious "Joy of Spain," and felt more and more enthralled and fascinated by the stranger's eyes, which, as he talked, lightened and glowed more and more as their glance played caressingly about him. He was beginning to wonder at that, when with some emphatic phrase the stranger laid his fingers on his knee, upon which a thrill shot through him as if a woman had touched him. He looked in the stranger's face, and the wonderful eyes seemed to search to the root of his being, and to draw the soul out of him. He had a flying thought—"Can it be a woman, after all, in this

strange shape?" and he knew no more . . . till he woke in the hospital bed.

That was the patient's story.

"Just look over your property here," said the doctor. "Have you lost anything?"

The young man turned over his watch and the contents of his purse, and answered that he had lost nothing.

"Strange—strange!" said Lefevre—"very strange! And the card—of course the stranger must have put it in your pocket."

"Which would seem to imply," said the young man, "that *he* knows something of the hospital."

"Well, said Lefevre, "we must see what can be done to clear the mystery up."

"Some of those newspaper-men have been here," said the house-physician, when they had left the ward, "and they will be sure to call again before the day is out. Shall I tell them anything of this?"

"Certainly," said Lefevre. "Publicity may help us to discover this amazing stranger."

"Do you quite believe the story?" asked the house-physician.

"I don't disbelieve it."

"But what did the stranger do to put him in that condition, which seems something more than hypnotism?"

"Ah," said Lefevre, "I don't yet understand it; but there are forces in Nature which few can comprehend, and which only one here and there can control and use."

## CHAPTER III.

### "M. DOLARO."

NEXT day men talked, newspaper in hand, at the breakfast-table, in the early trains, omnibuses, and tramcars, of the singular railway outrage. It was clear its purpose was not robbery. What, then, did it mean? Some—probably most—declared it was very plain what it meant; while others,—the few,—after much argument, confessed themselves quite mystified.

The police, too, were not idle. They made inquiries and took notes here and there. They discovered that the five o'clock train made but two pauses on its journey to London—at Croydon and at Clapham Junction. At neither of those places could a man in a fur coat be heard of as having descended from the train;

and yet it was manifest that he did not arrive at Grosvenor Road, where tickets were taken. After persistent and wider inquiries, however, at Clapham Junction (which was the most likely point of departure), a cabman was found who remembered having taken up a fare—a gentleman in a fur coat—about the hour indicated. He particularly remarked the gentleman, because he looked odd and foreign and half tipsy (that was how he seemed to him), because he was wrapped up "enough for Father Christmas," and because he asked to be driven such a long way—to a well-known hotel near the Crystal Palace, where "foreign gents" were fond of staying. Being asked what in particular had made him think the gentleman a foreigner, cabby could not exactly say; he believed, however, it was his coat and his eyes. Of his face he saw little or nothing, it was so muffled up; yet his tongue was English enough.

Inquiry was then pushed on to the hotel named by the cabman. A gentleman in a fur coat had certainly arrived there the evening

before, but no one had seen anything of him after his arrival. He had taken dinner in his private sitting-room, and had then paid his bill, because, he said, he must be gone early in the morning. About half an hour after dinner, when a waiter cleared the things away, he had gone to his room, and next morning he had left the hotel soon after dawn. Boots, half asleep, had seen him walk away, bag in hand, wrapped in his greatcoat,—walk away, it would seem, and dissolve into the mist of the morning, for from that point no further trace could be got of him. No such figure as his had been seen on any of the roads leading from the hotel, either by the early milkman, or by the belated coffee-stall keeper, or night cabman. Being asked what name the gentleman had given at the hotel, the book-keeper showed her record, with the equivocal name of "M. Dolaro." The name might be Italian or Spanish, —or English or American for that matter,— and the initial "M" might be French or anything in the world.

In the meantime Dr. Lefevre had been pon-

dering the details of the affair, and noting the aspects of his patient's condition; but the more he noted and pondered, the more contorted and inexplicable did the mystery become. His understanding boggled at its very first notes. It was almost unheard of that a young man of his patient's strong and healthy constitution and temper should be hypnotized or mesmerized at all, much less hypnotized to the verge of dissolution; and it was unprecedented that even a weak, hysterical subject should, after being unhypnotized, remain so long in prostrate exhaustion. Then, suppose these circumstances of the case were ordinary, there arose this question, which refused to be solved: Since it was ridiculous to suppose that the hypnotization was a wanton experiment, and since it had not been for the sake of robbery, what had been its object?

The interest of the case was emphasized and enlarged by an article in "The Daily Telegraph," in which was called to mind the singular story in its Paris correspondence a day or two before, of the young woman in the Hotel-

Dieu, which Lefevre had forgotten. The writer remarked on the points of similarity which the case in the Brighton train bore to that of the Paris pavement; insisted on the probable identity of the man in the fur coat with the man in the cloak; and appealed to Dr. Lefevre to explain the mystery, and to the police to find the man "who has alarmed the civilized world by a new form of outrage."

Lefevre was piqued by that article, and he went to see his patient day after day, in the constant hope of finding a solution of the puzzle that perplexed him. The direction in which he looked for light will be best suggested by remarking what were his peculiar theory and practice. Lefevre was not a materialistic physician; indeed, in the opinion of many of his brethren, he erred on the other side, and was too much inclined to mysticism. It may at least be said that he had an open mind, and a modest estimate of the discoveries of modern medical science. He had perceived while still a young man (he was now about forty) that all medical practice—as distinct from surgical—is

inexact and empirical, that, like English common law, it is based merely on custom, and a narrow range of experience; and he had therefore argued that a wider experience and research, especially among decaying nations, might lead to the discovery of a guiding principle in pathology. That conviction had taken him as medical officer to Egypt and India, where, amid the relics of civilizations half as old as time, he found traditions of a great scientific practice; and thence it had brought him back to study such foreign medical writers as Du Bois-Reymond, Nobili, Matteucci, and Muller, and to observe the method of the famous physicians of the Salpetriere. Like the great Charbon, he made nervous and hysterical disorders his specialty, in the treatment of which he was much given to the use of electricity. He had very pronounced "views," though he seldom troubled his brethren with them; for he was not of those who can hold a belief firmly only if it is also held by others.

More than a week had passed without discovery or promise of light, when one afternoon

he went to the hospital resolved to compass some explanation.

He walked at once, on entering the ward, to the bedside of his puzzling patient, who still lay limp as a dish-clout and drowsy as a sloth. He tested—as he had done almost daily—his nervous and respiratory powers with the exact instruments adapted for the purpose, and then, still unenlightened, he questioned him closely about his sensations. The young officer answered him with tolerable intelligence.

"I feel," he ended with saying, "as if all my energy had evaporated,—and I used to have no end,—just as a spirit evaporates if it is left open to the air."

The saying struck Lefevre mightily. "Energy" stood then to Lefevre as an almost convertible term for "electricity," and his successful experiments with electricity had opened up to him a vast field of conjecture, into which, on the smallest inflaming hint, he was wont to make an excursion. Such a hint was the saying of the young officer now, and, as he walked away, he found himself, as it were, knocking at

the door of a great discovery. But the door did not open on that summons, and he resolved straightway to discuss the subject with Julius Courtney, who, though an amateur, had about as complete a knowledge of it as himself, and who could bring to bear, he believed, a finer intelligence.

He first sought Julius at the Hyacinth Club, where he frequently spent the afternoon. Failing to find him there, he inquired for him at his chambers in the Albany. Hearing nothing of him there, and the ardor of his quest having cooled a little, he stepped out across the way to his own home in Savile Row.

There he found a note from his mother, with a touch of mystery in its wording. She said she wanted very much to have a serious conversation with him; she had been expecting for days to see him, and she begged him to go that evening to dinner if he could. "Julius," said she, "will be here, and one or two others."

The mention of Julius as a visitor at his mother's house reminded him of his promise to that lady to find out how the young man was

connected: engrossed as he had been with his strange case, he had almost forgotten the promise, and he had done nothing to fulfil it but tap ineffectually for admission to his friend's confidence. He therefore considered with some anxiety what he should do, for Lady Lefevre could on occasion be exacting and severe with her son. He concluded nothing could be done before dinner, but he went prepared to be questioned and perhaps rated. He was pleased to find that his mother seemed to have forgotten his promise as much as he had, and to see her in the best of spirits with a tableful of company.

"Oh, you have come," said she, presenting her cheek to her son; "I thought that after all you might be detained by that mysterious case you have at the hospital. Here's Dr. Rippon —and Julius too—dying to hear all about it;" but she gave no hint of the serious conversation which she said in her note she desired.

"Not I, Lady Lefevre," Julius protested. "I don't like medical revelations; they make

me feel as if I were sitting at the confessional of mankind."

Noting by the way that Julius and his sister seemed much taken up with each other, and that Julius, while as fascinating as ever, and as ready and apt and intelligent of speech, seemed somewhat more chastened in manner and less effervescent in health,—like a fire of coal that has spent its gas and settled into a steady glow of heat,—he turned to Dr Rippon, a tall, thin old gentleman of over seventy, but who yet had a keen tongue, and a shrewd, critical eye. He had been an intimate friend of the elder Lefevre, and the son greeted him with respect and affection.

"Who is the gentleman?" said Dr. Rippon, aside, when their greeting was over. "It does an old man's heart good to see and hear him," and the old doctor straightened himself. "But he'll get old too; that's the sad thing, from my point of view, that such beauty of person and swift intelligence of mind *must* grow old and withered, and slow and dull. What did you say his name is, John?"

"His name is Courtney—Julius Courtney," said Lefevre.

"Courtney," mused the old man, stroking his eyebrow; "I once knew a man of that name, or, rather, who took that name. I wonder if this friend of yours is of the same family; he is not unlike the man I knew."

"Oh," said Lefevre, immediately interested, "he may be of the same family, but I don't know anything of his relations. Who was the man, may I ask, that you knew?"

"Well," said the old gentleman, settling down to a story, which Lefevre was sure would be full of interest and contemporary allusion, for the old physician had in his time seen many men and many things—"it is a romantic story in its way."

He was on the point of beginning it when dinner was announced.

"I should like to hear the story when we return to the drawing-room," said Lefevre.

Over dinner, Lefevre was beset with inquiries about his mysterious case:—Was the young man better? Had he been very ill? Was he

handsome? What had the foreign-looking stranger done to him? and for what purpose had he done it? These questions were mostly ignorant and thoughtless, and Lefevre either parried them or answered them with great reserve. When the ladies retired from table, however, more particular and curious queries were pressed upon him as to the real character of the outrage upon the young man. He replied that he had not yet discovered, though he believed he was getting "warm."

"Is it fair," said Julius, "to ask you in what direction you are looking for an explanation or revelation?"

"Oh, quite fair," said Lefevre, welcoming the question. "To put it in a word, I look to *electricity*,—animal electricity. I have been for some time working round, and I hope gradually getting nearer, a scientific secret of enormous—of transcendent value. Can you conceive, Julius, of a universal principle in Nature being got so under control as to form a universal basis of cure?"

"Can I conceive?" said Julius. "And is that electricity too?"

"I hope to find it is."

"Oh, how slow!" exclaimed Julius,—"oh, how slow you professional scientific men become! You begin to run on tram-lines, and you can't get off them! Why fix yourself to call this principle you're seeking for 'electricity'? It will probably restrict your inquiry, and hamper you in several ways. I would declare to every scientific man, 'Unless you become as a little child or a poet, you will discover no great truth!' Setting aside your bias towards what you call 'electricity,' you are really hoping to discover something that was discovered or divined thousands of years ago! Some have called it 'od'—an 'imponderable fluid'—as you know; you and others wish to call it 'electricity.' I prefer to call it 'the spirit of life,—a name simple, dignified, and expressive!'

"It has the disadvantage of being poetic," said Dr. Rippon, with grave irony; "and doc-

tors don't like poetry mixed up with their science."

"It *is* poetic," admitted Julius, regarding the old doctor with interest, "and therefore it is intelligible. The spirit of life is electric and elective, and it is 'imponderable': it can neither be weighed nor measured! It flows and thrills in the nerves of men and women, animals and plants, throughout the whole of Nature! It connects the whole round of the Cosmos by one glowing, teasing, agonizing principle of being, and makes us and beasts and trees and flowers all kindred!"

"That is all very beautiful and fresh," said Lefevre, "but——"

"But," interrupted Julius, "it is not a new truth: the poet divined it ages ago! Buddha, thousands of years ago, perceived it, and taught that 'all life is linked and kin;' so did the Egyptians and the Greeks, when they worshipped the principle of life everywhere; and so did our own barbaric ancestors, when the woods—the wonderful, mystic woods!—were their temples. Life—the spirit of life!—is

always beautiful; always to be desired and worshipped!"

"Yes," said old Dr. Rippon, who had listened to this astonishing rhapsody with evident interest, with sympathetic and intelligent eye; "but a time will come even to you, when death will appear more beautiful and friendly and desirable than life."

Courtney was silent, and looked for a second or two deadly sick. He cast a searching eye on Dr. Rippon.

"That's the one thought," said he, "that makes me sometimes feel as if I were already under the horror of the shade. It's not that I am afraid of dying—of merely ceasing to live; it is that life may cease to be delightful and friendly, and become an intolerable, decaying burden."

He filled a glass with Burgundy, and set himself attentively to drink it, lingering on the bouquet and the flavor. Lefevre beheld him with surprise, for he had never before seen Julius take wine: he was wont to say that converse

with good company was intoxicating enough for him.

"Why, Julius," said Lefevre, "that's a new experience you are trying,—is it not?"

Julius looked embarrassed an instant, and then replied, "I have begun it very recently. I did not think it wise to postpone the experience till it might become an absolute necessity."

Old Dr. Rippon watched him empty the glass with a musing eye. "'I sought in mine heart,'" said he, gravely quoting, "'to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom.'"

"True," said Julius, considering him closely. But, for completeness' sake, you ought to quote also, 'Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy.'"

Lefevre looked from the one to the other in some darkness of perplexity.

"You appear, John," said the old doctor with a smile, "not to know one of the oldest and greatest of books: you will find it included in your Bible. Mr. Courtney clearly knows it

I should not be surprised to hear he had adopted its philosophy of 'wisdom and madness and folly.'"

"Surely you cannot say," remarked Julius, "that the writer of that book had what is called a 'philosophy.' He was moved by an irresistible impulse, of which he gives you the explanation when he uses that magnificent sentence about having 'the world set in his heart.'"

"Yes," said the old doctor, in a subdued, backward voice, regarding Julius with the contemplative eyes of memory. "You will, I hope, forgive me when I say that you remind me very much of a gentleman who took the name of Courtney. I knew him years ago: was he a relation of yours, I wonder?"

"Possibly," said Julius, seeming scarcely interested; "though the name of Courtney, I believe, is not very uncommon." Then, turning to Lefevre, he said, "I hope you don't think I wish to make light of your grand idea. I only mean that you must widen your view, if you would work it out to success."

With that Lefevre became more curious to

hear Dr. Rippon's story. So when they wnet to the drawing-room he got the old gentleman into a secluded corner, and reminded him of his promise.

"Yes," said the doctor, "it is a romantic story. About forty years ago,—yes, about forty: it was immediately after the fall of Louis Philippe,—I went with my friend Lord Rokeby to Madrid. He went as ambassador, and I as his physician, There was then at the Spanish Court a very handsome hidalgo, Don Hernando—I forget all his names, but his surname was De Sandoval. He was of the bluest blood in Spain, and a marquis, but poor as a church mouse. He had a great reputation for gallant adventures and for mysterious scientific studies. On the last ground I sought and cultivated his acquaintance. But he was a proud, reserved person, and I could never quite make out what his studies were, except that he read a great deal, and believed firmly in the Arabic philosophers and alchemists of the middle ages; and he would sometimes talk with the same sort of rhapsodical mysticism as this young man de-

lights you with. We did not have much opportunity for developing an intimacy in any case; for he fell in love with the daughter of our Chief Secretary of Legation, a bright, lovely English girl, and that ended disastrously for his position in Madrid. He made his proposals to her father, and had them refused; chiefly, I believe, on account of his loose reputation. The girl, too, was the heiress of an uncle's property on this curious condition, it appeared,—that whoever should marry her should take the uncle's name of *Courtney*. Don Hernando and the young lady disappeared; they were married, and he took the name of Courtney, and was forbidden to return to Madrid. He and his wife settled in Paris, where I used to meet them frequently; then they travelled, I believe, and I lost sight of them. I returned to Paris on a visit some few years ago, and I asked an old friend about the Courtneys; he believed they were both dead, though he could give me no certain news about them."

"Supposing," said Lefevre, "that this Julius were their son, do you know of any reason why

he should be reserved about his parentage?"

"No," said the old man, "no;—unless it be that Hernando was not episcopal in his affections; but I should think the young man is scarcely Puritan enough to be ashamed of that."

Lefevre and the old man both looked round for Julius. They caught sight of him and Leonora Lefevre standing one on either side of a window, with their eyes fixed upon each other.

"The young lady," said the old doctor, "seems much taken up with him."

"Yes," said Lefevre; "and she's my sister."

"Ah," said the old doctor; "I fear my remark was rather unreserved."

"It is true," said Lefevre.

He left Dr. Rippon, to seek his mother. He found her excited and warm, and without a word to spare for him.

"You wanted," said he, "some serious talk with me, mother?"

"Oh, yes," said she; "but I can't talk seriously now: I can scarcely talk at all. But do you see how Nora and Julius are taken up with

each other? I never before saw such a pair of moonstruck mortals! I believe I have heard of the moon having a magnetic influence on people: do you think it has? But he is a charming man!"—glancing towards Julius—"I'm more than half in love with him myself. Now I must go. Come quietly one afternoon, and then we can talk."

Her son abstained from recounting, as he had proposed to himself, what he had heard from Dr. Rippon: he would reserve it for the quiet afternoon. He took his leave almost immediately, bearing with him a deep impression—like a strongly bitten etching wrought on his memory—of his last glimpse of the drawing-room: Nora and Julius sat talking across a small table, and the tall, pale, gaunt figure of Dr. Rippon approaching and stooping between them. It seemed a sinister reminder of the words the old doctor had addressed to Julius,—"*A time will come when death will appear more beautiful and friendly and desirable than life!*"

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MAN OF THE CROWD.

In a few days Dr. Lefevre found a quiet afternoon, and went and told his mother the story of the Spanish marquis which he had got from Dr. Rippon. She hailed the story with delight. Courtney was a fascinating figure to her before: it needed but that to clothe him with a complete romantic heroism; for, of course, she did not doubt that he was the son of the Spanish grandee. She wished to put it to him at once whether he was not, but she was dissuaded by her son from mentioning the matter yet to either Julius or her daughter.

"If he wishes," said Lefevre, "to keep it secret for some reason, it would be an impertinence to speak about it. We shall, however,

have a perfect right to ask him about himself if his attentions to Nora go on.'

Soon afterwards (it was really a fortnight; but in a busy life day melts into day with amazing rapidity), Lefevre was surprised at dinner, and somewhat irritated, by a letter from his mother. She wrote that they had seen nothing of Julius Courtney for three or four days,—which was singular, since for the past three or four weeks he had been a daily visitor; latterly he had begun to look fagged and ill, and it was possible he was confined to his room,—though, after all, that was scarcely likely, for he had not answered a note of inquiry which she had sent. She begged her son to call at his chambers, the more so as Nora was pining in Julius's absence to a degree which made her mother very anxious.

With professional suspicion Lefevre told himself that if Julius, with his magnificent health, was fallen ill, it must be for some outrageous reason. But even if he was ill, he need not be unmannerly: he might have let his friends who had been in the habit of seeing him daily know what had come to him. Was

it possible, the doctor thought, that he was repenting of having given Nora and her mother so much cause to take his assiduous attentions seriously? He resolved to see Julius at once, if he were at his chambers.

He left his wine unfinished (to the delight of his grave and silent man in black), hastily took his hat from its peg in the hall, and passed out into the street, while his man held the door open. In two minutes he had passed the northern gateway of the Albany, which, as most people know, is just at the southern end of Savile Row. Courtney's door was speedily opened in response to his peremptory summons.

"Is your master at home, Jenkins?" asked Lefevre of the well-dressed serving-man, who looked distinguished enough to be master himself.

"No, doctor," answered Jenkins; "he is not."

"Gone out," said Lefevre, "to the club or to dinner, I suppose?"

"No, doctor," repeated Jenkins; "he is not. He went away four days ago."

"Went away!" exclaimed Lefevre.

"He do sometimes go away by himself, sir. He is so fond of the country, and he likes to be by himself. It is the only thing that do him good."

"Becomes solitary, does he?" said Lefevre. "Yes; intelligent, impulsive persons like him, that live at high pressure, often have black moods." That was not quite what he meant, but it was enough for Jenkins.

"Yes, sir," said Jenkins; "he do sometimes have 'em black. He don't seem to take no pride in himself, as he do usual—don't seem to care somehow if he look a gentleman or a common man."

"But your master, Jenkins," said Lefevre, "can never look a common man."

"No, sir," said Jenkins; "he cannot, whatever he do."

"He is gone into the country, then?" asked Lefevre.

"Yes, sir; I packed his small portmantew for him four days ago."

"And where is he gone? He told you, I suppose?"

"No, sir; he do not usual tell me when he is like that."

It did not seem possible to learn anything from Jenkins, in spite of the apparent intimacy of his conversation, so Lefevre left him, and returned to his own house. He had sat but a little while in his laboratory (where he had been occupying his small intervals of leisure lately in electrical studies and experiments) when, as chance would have it, the last post brought him a note from Dr. Rippon. Its purport was curious.

"*I think*," the letter ran, "*you were sufficiently interested in the story I told you some week or two ago about one Hernando Courtney, not to be bored by a note on the same subject. Last night I accompanied my daughter and son-in-law to the Lyceum Theatre. On coming out we had to walk down Wellington Street into the Strand to find our carriage, and in the surging*

*crowd about there I am almost sure I saw the Hernando Courtney whom I believed to be dead,* Aut Courtney aut Diabolus. *I have never heard satisfactory evidence of his death, and I should very much like to know if he is really still alive and in London. It has occurred to me that, considering the intimacy of yourself and your family with the gentleman who was made known to me at your mother's house by the name of Courtney, you may have heard by now the rights of the case. If you have any news, I shall be glad to share it with you.*"

Considering this in association with the absence of Julius, Lefevre found his wits becoming involved in a puzzle. He could not settle to work, so he put on overcoat and hat, and sallied out again. He had no fixed purpose : he only felt the necessity of motion to resolve hinself back into his normal calm. The air was keen from the east. May, which had opened with such wanton warmth and seductiveness, turned a cold shoulder on the world as she took herself off. It was long since he had indulged in an evening walk in the lamp-lit

streets, so he stepped out eastward against the shrewd wind. Insensibly his attention forsook the busy and anxious present, and slipped back to the days of golden and romantic youth, when the crowded nocturnal streets were full of the mystery of life. He recalled the sensations of those days—the sharp doubts of self, the frequent strong desires to drink deep of all that life had to offer, and the painful recoils from temptation, which he felt would ruin, if yielded to, his hope of himself, and his ambition of filling a worthy place among men.

Thus musing, he walked on, taking, without noting it, the most frequented turnings, and soon he found himself in the Strand. It was that middle time of evening, after the theatres and restaurants have sucked in their crowds, when the frequenters of the streets have some reserve in their vivacity, before reckless roisterers have begun to taste the lees of pleasure, and to shout and jostle on the pavements. He was walking on the side of the way next the river, when, near the Adelphi, he became aware of a man before him, wearing a slouch-hat and

a greatcoat—a man who appeared to choose the densest part of the throng, to prefer to be rubbed against and hustled rather than not. There was something about the man which held Lefevre's attention and roused his curiosity—something in the swing of his gait and the set of his shoulders. The man, too, seemed urged on by a singular haste, which permitted him to be the slowest and easiest of passengers in the thick of the crowd, but carried him swiftly over the less frequented parts of the pavement. The doctor began to wonder if he was a pickpocket, and to look about for the watchful eye of a policeman. He kept close behind him past the door of the Strand Theatre, when the throng became slacker, and the man turned quickly about and returned the way he had come. Then Lefevre had a glimpse of his face,—the merest passing glimpse, but it made him pause and ask himself where he had seen it before. A dark, foreign-looking, man, with a haggard appeal in his eye: he tried to find the place of such a figure in his memory, but for the time he tried in vain.

Before the doctor recovered himself the man was well past, and disappearing in the throng. He hurried after, determined to overtake him, and to make a full and satisfying perusal of his face and figure. He found that difficult, however, because of the man's singular style of progression. To maintain an even pace for himself, moreover, Lefevre had to walk very much in the roadway, the dangers of which, from passing cabs and omnibuses, forbade his fixing his attention on the man alone. Yet he was more and more piqued to look him in the face; for the longer he followed him the more he was struck with the oddity of his conduct. He had already noted how he hurried over the empty spaces of pavement and lingered sinuously in the thronged parts; he now remarked further that those who came into immediate contact with him (and they were mostly young people who were to be met with at that season of the night) glanced sharply at him, as if they had experienced some suspicious sensation, and seemed inclined to remonstrate, till they looked in his face.

Lefevre could not arrive at a clear front view till, by Charing Cross Station, the man turned on the kerb to look after a handsome youth who crossed before him, and passed over the road. Then the doctor saw the face in the light of a street-lamp, and the sight sent the blood in a gush from his heart. It was a dark hairless face, terribly blanched and emaciated, as if by years of darkness and prison, with the impress of age and death, but yet with a wistful light in the eyes, and a firm sensuousness about the mouth that betrayed a considerable interest in life. He turned his eyes away an instant, to bring memory and association to bear. When he looked again the man was moving away. At once recognition rushed upon him like a wave of light. The terribly worn, ghastly features, resolved themselves into a kind of death-mask of Julius! The wave recoiled and smote him again. Who could the man be, therefore, who was so like Julius, and yet was not Julius?—who could he be but Julius's father,—that Hernando Courtney whom

Dr. Rippon believed he had seen the evening before?

Here was a coil to unravel! Julius's father —the Spanish marquis that was—supposed to be dead, but yet wandering in singular fashion about the London streets, clearly not desiring, much less courting, opportunities of being recognized; Julius not caring to speak of his father, apparently ignoring his continued existence, and yet apparently knowing enough of his movements to avoid him when he came to London by suddenly removing "into the country" without leaving his address. What was the meaning of so much mystery? Crime? debt? political intrigue? or, what?

The mysterious Hernando went on his way, by the southern sweep of Trafalgar Square and Cockspur Street, to the Haymarket, and Lefevre followed with attention and curiosity bent on him, but yet with so little thought of playing spy that, if Hernando had gone any other way or had returned along the Strand, he would probably have let him go. And as they went on, the doctor could not but note, as

before, how the object of his curiosity lingered wherever there was a press of people, whether on the pavement or on a refuge at a crossing, and hurried on wherever the pavement was sparsely peopled or whenever the persons encountered were at all advanced in years. Indeed, the farther he followed the more was his attention compelled to remark that Hernando sharply avoided contact with the weakly, the old, and the decrepit, and wonder why the young people of either sex whom he brushed against should turn as if the touch of him waked suspicion and a something hostile. Thus they traversed the Haymarket, the Criterion pavement, and, flitting across to the Quadrant, the more popular side of Regent Street, among pushing groups, weary stragglers, and steady pedestrians. Lefevre had a mind to turn aside and go home when he was opposite Vigo Street, but he was drawn on by the hope of observing something that might give him a clue to the Courtney mystery. When Oxford Circus was reached, however, Hernando jumped into a cab and drove rapidly

off, and Lefevre returned to his own fireside.

He sat for some time over a cigar and a grog, walking in imagination round and round the mystery, which steadfastly refused to dissolve or to be set aside. His own honor, and perhaps the peace of his mother and sister, were involved in it. He was resolved to ask Julius for an explanation as soon as he could come to speech with him; but yet, in spite of that assurance which he gave himself, he returned to the mystery again and again, and beset and bewildered himself with questions: Why was Julius estranged from his father? What was the secret of the old man's life which had left such an awful impress on his face? And why was he nightly haunting the busiest pavements of London, in the crowd, but not of it, urged on as by some desire or agony?

He went to bed, but not to sleep. In the quiet and the darkness his imagination ranged without constraint over the whole field of his questionings. He went back upon Dr. Rippon's story of the Spanish marquis, and fixed on the mention of his occult studies. He saw him, in

fancy, without wife or son, cut off from the position and activities in his native country which his proper rank would have given, him, sequester himself from society altogether, and give himself up to the study of those Arabian sages and alchemists in whom he had delighted when he was a young man. He saw him shun the daylight, and sleep its hours away, and then by night abandon himself like another Cagliostro to strange experiments with alembic and crucible, breathing acrid and poisonous vapors, seeking to extort from Nature her yet undiscovered secrets,—the Philosopher's Stone, and the Elixir of Life. He saw him turn for a little from his strange and deadly experiments, and venture forth to show his blanched and worn face among the throngs of men; but even there he still pursued his anxious quest of life in the midst of death. He saw him wander up and down, in and out, among the evening crowd, delighting in contact with such of his fellow-creatures as had health and youth, and seeking, seeking—he knew not what. From this phantasmagoria he dozed off into the dark plains of

sleep; but even there the terribly blanched and emaciated face was with him, bending wistful worn eyes upon him and melting him to pity. And still again the vision of the streets would arise about the face, and the sleeper would be aware of the man to whom the face belonged walking quickly and sinuously, seeking and enjoying contact with the throng, and strangely causing many to resent his touch as if they had been pricked or stung, and yet urged onward in some further quest,—an anxious quest it sometimes resolved itself into for Julius, who ever evaded him.

Thus his brain labored through the dead hours of the night, viewing and reviewing these scenes and figures, to extract a meaning from them; but he was no nearer the heart of the mystery when the morning broke and he was waked by the shrill chatter of the sparrows. The day, however, brought an event which shed a lurid light upon the Courtney difficulty, and revealed a vital connection between facts which Lefevre had not guessed were related.

# CHAPTER V.

## THE REMARKABLE CASE OF LADY MARY FANE.

It was the kind of day that is called seasonable. If the sun had been obscured, the air would have been felt to be wintry; but the sunshine was full and warm, and so the world rejoiced, and declared it was a perfectly lovely May day,—just as a man who is charmed with the smiles and beauty of a woman, thinks her complete though she may have a heart of ice. Lefevre, as he went his hospital round that afternoon, found his patients revelling in the sunlight like flies. He himself was in excellent spirits, and he said a cheery or facetious word here and there as he passed, which gave infinite delight to the thin and bloodless atomies under his care; for a joke from so serious and awful a being as the doctor is to a desponding patient better than all the drugs of the pharmacopœia:

it is as exquisite and sustaining as a divine text of promise to a religious enthusiast.

Dr. Lefevre was thus passing round his female ward, with a train of attentive students at his heels, when the door was swung open and two attendants entered, bearing a stretcher between them, and accompanied by the house-physician and a policeman.

"What is this?" asked Lefevre, with a touch of severity; for it was irregular to intrude a fresh case into a ward while the physician was going his round.

"I thought, sir," said the house-physician, "you would like to see her at once: it seems to me a case similar to that of the man found in the Brighton train."

"Where was this lady found?" asked Lefevre of the policeman. He used the word "lady" advisedly, for though the dress was that of a hospital nurse or probationer, the unconscious face was that of an educated gentlewoman. "Why, bless my soul!" he cried, upon more particular scrutiny of her features—"it

seems to me I know her! Surely I do! Where did you say she was found?"

The policeman explained that he was on his beat outside St. James's Park, when a park-keeper called him in and showed him, in one of the shady walks, the lady set on a bench as if she had fainted. The keeper said he had taken particular notice of her, because he saw from her dress and her veil she was a hospital lady. When he first set eyes on her, an old gentleman was sitting talking to her—a strange, dark, foreign-looking gentleman, in a soft hat and a big Inverness cape.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the doctor. "The very man! That's the meaning of it. And I did not guess!"

His assistant and the policeman gazed at him in surprise; but he recovered himself and asked, with a serious and determined knitting of the brows, if the policeman had seen the old gentleman. The policeman replied he had not; the gentleman was nowhere to be seen when he was called in. The keeper saw him only once; when he returned that way again, in about a

quarter of an hour, he found the lady alone and apparently asleep. She had a very handsome umbrella by her side, and therefore he kept within eye-shot of her on this side and on that, lest some park-loafer should seize so good a chance of thieving. He thus passed her two or three times. The last time, he remarked that she had slipped a little to one side, and that her umbrella had fallen to the grouud. He went to pick it up, and it struck him as he bent that she looked strangely quiet and pale. He spoke to her; she made no reply. He touched her—he even in his fear ventured to shake her—but she made no sign; and he ran to call the police-man. They then brought her straight to the hospital, because they could see she was a hos-pital lady of some sort.

"It must—it must be the same!" said Lefevre.

"I thought, when I first heard of it below," said the house-physician, "that it must be the same man as was the cause of the other case, in the Brighton train."

"No doubt it is the same. But I was think-

ing of it in another—a far more serious sense!" Then turning to the waiting policeman, he said, "Of course, you must report this to your inspector?"

"Yes, sir," said the policeman.

"Give him my compliments, then, and say I shall see him presently."

Yet, he thought, how could he speak to the official, with all that he suspected, all that he feared, in his heart? with his attention on the *qui vive* with his experiences and speculations of the night, he was seized, as we have seen, by the conclusion that the "strange, dark, foreign-looking gentleman" of the park-keeper's story was the same whose steps he had followed the evening before, without guessing that the man was perambulating the pavement and passing among the crowd in search, doubtless, of a fresh victim for occult experiment or outrage! That conclusion once determined, shock after shock smote upon his sense. What if the mysterious person were really proved to be Julius's father? What if he had entered upon a course of experiment or outrage (he passed in rapid review

the mysteries of the Paris pavement and the Brighton train, and this of the Park)—outrage yet unnamable because unknown, but which would amaze and confound society, and bring signal punishment upon the offender? And what—what if Julius knew all that, and therefore sought to keep his parentage hidden?

"She is ready, doctor," said the Sister of the ward at his elbow, adding with a touch of excitement in her manner as he turned to her, "do you know who she is? Look at this card; we noticed the name first on her linen."

Dr. Lefevre looked at the card and read, "Lady Mary Fane, Carlton Gardens, S.W."

"I suspected as much," said he. "Lord Rivercourt's daughter. It's a bad business. She has been learning at St. Thomas's the duties of nurse and dresser, which accounts for her being in that uniform."

He went to the bed on which his new patient had been laid, and very soon satisfied himself that her case was similar to that of the young officer, though graver much than it. He wrote a telegram to Lord Rivercourt, sent the house-

physician for his electrical apparatus, and returned to the bedside. He looked at his patient. He had not remarked her hitherto more than other women of his acquaintance, though he had sometimes sat at her father's table; but now he was moved by a beauty which was enhanced by helplessness—a beauty stamped with a calm disregard of itself—the manifest expression of a noble and loving soul, which had lived above the plane of doubt and fear and gusty passion. Her wealth of lustrous black hair lay abroad upon her pillow, and made an admirable setting for her finely-modelled head and neck. As he looked at this excellent presentment, and thought of the intelligence and activity which had been wont to animate it, resentment rose in him against the man who, for whatever end, had subdued the noble woman to that condition, and a deep impatience penetrated him that he had not discovered—had even scarcely guessed—the purpose or the method of the subjugation!

It was, however, not speculation but action that was needed then. The apparatus de-

scribed in the case of the young officer was ready, and the house-physician was waiting to give his assistance. The stimulation of Will and Electricity was applied to resuscitate the patient—but with the smallest success: there was only a faint flutter, a passing slight rigidity of the muscles, and all seemed again as it had been. The exhausting nature of the operation or experiment forbade its immediate repetition. Disappointment pervaded the doctor's being, though it did not appear in the doctor's manner.

"We'll try again in half an hour," said he to his assistant, and turned away to complete his round of the ward.

At the end of the half-hour, Lefevre and the house-physician were again by Lady Mary's bedside. Again, with fine but firm touch, Lefevre stroked nerves and muscles to stimulate them into normal action; again he and his assistant put out their electrical force through the electrode; and again the result was nothing but a passing galvanic quiver. The doctor, though he maintained his professional calm,

was smitten with alarm,—as a man is who, walking through darkness and danger to the rescue of a friend, finds himself stopped by an unscalable wall. While he sought fresh means of help, his patient might pass beyond his reach. He did not think she would—he hoped she would not; but her condition, so obstinately resistant to his restoratives, was so peculiar, that he could not in the least determine the issue. Imagination and speculation were excited, and he asked himself whether, after all, the explanation of his failure might not be of the simplest—a difference of sex! The secrets of nature, so far as he had discovered, were of such amazing simplicity, that it would not surprise him now to find that the electrical force of a man varied vitally from that of a woman. He explained this suspicion to his assistant.

"I think," said he, "we must make another attempt, for her condition may become the more serious the longer it is left. We'll set the Sister and the nurse to try this time, and we'll turn her bed north and south, in the line of the earth's magnetism." But just then the lady's

father, the old Lord Rivercourt, appeared in response to the doctor's telegram, and the experiment with the women had to wait. The old lord was naturally filled with wonder and anxiety when he saw his apparently lifeless daughter. He was amazed that she should have been overcome by such influence as, he understood, the old gentleman must wield. She had always, he said, enjoyed the finest health, and was as little inclined to hysteria as woman well could be. Lefevre told the father that this was something other than hystero-hypnotism, which, while it reassured him as to his daughter's former health, made him the more anxious regarding her present condition.

"It is very extraordinary," said the old lord; "but whatever it is,—and you say it is like the young man's case that we have all read about, whatever it is,"—and he laid his hand emphatically on the doctor's arm,—"she could not be in more capable hands than yours."

That assurance, though soothing to the doctor's self-esteem, added gravely to his sense of responsibility.

While they were yet speaking, Lefevre was further troubled by the announcement that a detective-inspector desired to speak with him! Should he tell the inspector all that he had seen the night before, and all that he suspected now, or should he hold his peace? His duty as a citizen, as a doctor, and as, in a sense, the protector of his patient, seemed to demand the one course, while his consideration for Julius and for his own family suggested the other. Surely never was a simple, upright doctor involved in a more bewildering *imbroglio!*

The detective-inspector entered, and opened an interview which proved less embarrassing than Lefevre had anticipated. The detective had already made up his mind about the case and his course regarding it. He put no curious questions; he merely inquired concerning the identity and the condition of the lady. When he heard who she was, and when he caught the import of an aside from Lord Rivercourt that it would be worth any one's while to discover the mysterious offender, professional zeal sparkled in his eye.

"I think I know my man," said he; and the doctor looked the lively interest he felt. "I am right, I believe, Dr. Lefevre, in setting this down to the author of that other case you had, that from the Brighton train?" Lefevre thought he was right in that. "'M. Dolaro': that was the name. I had charge of the case, and was baffled. I shan't miss him this time. I shall get on his tracks at once; he can't have left the Park in broad daylight, a singular man like him, without being noticed."

"It rather puzzles me," said the doctor, "what crime you will charge him with."

"It is an outrage," said Lord Rivercourt; "and if it is not criminal, it seems about time it were made so."

"Oh, we'll class it, my lord," said the detective; "never fear."

The detective departed; but Lord Rivercourt seemed not inclined to stir.

"You will excuse me," said Lefevre; "but I must perform a very delicate operation."

"To be sure," said the old lord; "and you want me to go. How stupid of me! I kept

waiting for my daughter to wake up; but I see that, of course, you have to rouse her. It did not occur to me what that machine meant. Something magneto-electric—eh? Forgive one question, Lefevre. I can see you look anxious: is Mary's condition very serious?—Most serious? I can bear to be told the complete truth."

The doctor was touched by the old gentleman's emotion. He took his hand. "It is serious," said he—"most serious, for this reason, that I cannot account for her obstinate lethargy; but I think there is no immediate danger. If necessity arises, I shall send for you again."

"To the House," said Lord Rivercourt. "I shall be sitting out a debate on our eternal Irish question."

Lefevre was left seriously discomposed, but at once he sent for the house-physician, summoned the Sister and the nurse, and set about his third attempt to revive his patient. He got the bed turned north and south. He carefully explained to the two women what was

demanded of them, and applied them to their task; but, whatever the cause, the failure was completer than before: there was not even a tremor of muscle in the unconscious lady, and the doctor was suffused with alarm and humiliation. Failure! — failure! — failure! Such a concatenation had never happened to him before!

But failure only nerves the brave and capable man to a supreme effort for success. Still self-contained, and apparently unmoved, the doctor gave directions for some liquid nourishment to be artificially administered to his patient, said he would return after dinner, and went his way. The society of friends or acquaintances was distasteful to him then; the thought even of seeing his own familiar dining-room and his familiar man in black, whose silent obsequiousness he felt would be a reproach, was disagreeable. All his thought, all his attention, all his faculties were drawn tight to this acute point— he must succeed; he must accomplish the task he had set himself: life at that hour was worth

living only for that purpose. But how was success to be compelled?

He walked for a while about the streets, and then he went into a restaurant and ordered a modest dinner. He broke and crumbled his bread with both hands, his mind still intent on that one engrossing, acute point. While thus he sat he heard a voice, as in a dream, say, "The very doctor you read about. That's the second curious case he's got in a month or so. . . . Oh yes—very clever; he treats them, I understand, in the same sort of way as the famous Dr. Charbon of Paris would. . . . I should say so; quite as good, if not better than Charbon. I'd rather have an English doctor any day than a French. . . . His name's in the paper—*Lefevre*." Then the doctor woke to the fact that he was being talked about. He perceived his admirers were sitting at a table a little behind him, and he judged from what had been said that his fresh case was already being made "copy" of in the evening papers. The flattering comparison of himself with Dr. Charbon had an oddly stimulating effect upon him,

notwithstanding that it had been uttered by he knew not whom,—a mere *vox et præterea nihil.* He disclaimed to himself the truth of the comparison, but all the same he was encouraged to bend his attention with his utmost force to the solution of his difficult problem—what to do to rouse his patient ?

He sat thus, amid the bustle and buzz of the restaurant, the coming and going of waiters, completely abstracted, assailing his difficulty with questions on this side and on that,—when suddenly out of the mists that obscured it there rose upon his mental vision an idea, which appealed to him as a solution of the whole, and, more than that, as a secret that would revolutionize all the treatment of nervous weakness and derangement. How came the idea ? How do ideas ever come ? As inspirations, we say, or as revelations ; and truly they come upon us with such amazing and inspiriting freshness, that they may well be called either the one or the other. But no great idea had ever yet an epiphany but from the ferment of more familiar small ideas,—just

as the glorious Aphrodite was born of the ferment and pother of the waves of the sea. Lefevre's new idea clothed itself in the form of a comparative question—*Why should there not be Transfusion of Nervous Force, Ether, or Electricity, just as there is Transfusion of Blood?*

He pushed his dinner away (he could scarcely have told what he had been eating and drinking), called for his bill, and returned with all speed to the hospital. He entered his female ward just as evening prayers were finished, before the lights were turned out and night began for the patients. He summoned his trusted assistant, the house-physician, again.

"I am about to attempt," said he, "an altogether new operation: the patient has remained just as I left her, I suppose?"

"Just the same."

"Nervous Force, whether it be Electricity or not, is manifestly a fluid of some sort: why should it not be transfused as the other vital fluid is?"

"Indeed, sir, when you put it so," said the house-physician, suddenly steeled and brightened into interest, "I should say, 'why not?' The only reason against it is what can be assigned against all new things—it has not, so far as I know, been done."

"Exactly. I am going to try. I think, in case we need a current, so to say, to draw it along, that we shall use the apparatus too; we shall therefore need the women."

"You mean, of course," said the young man, "you will cut a main nerve."

"I shall use this nerve," said Lefevre, indicating the main nerve in the wrist,—upon which the young man, in his ready enthusiasm, began to bare his arm.

"My dear fellow," said Lefevre, "do you consider what you are so promptly offering? Do you know that my experiment, if successful, might leave you a paralytic, or an imbecile, or even—a corpse?"

"I'll take the risk, sir," said the young man.

"I can't permit it, my boy," said Lefevre,

laying his hand on his arm, and giving him a look of kindness. "Nobody must run this risk but me. I don't mean, however, to cut the nerve."

"What then, sir?

"Well," said Lefevre, "this Nervous Force, or Nervous Ether, is clearly a very volatile, and at the same time a very searching fluid. It can easily pass through the skin from a nerve in one person to a nerve in another. There is no difficulty about that; the difficulty is to set up a rapid enough vibration to whirl the current through!" He said that in meditative fashion: he was clearly at the moment repeating the working out of the problem.

"I see," said the young man, looking thoughtful.

"Now you are a musician, are you not?"

"I play a little," said the young man, with a bewildered look.

"You play the violin?"

"Yes."

"And, of course, you have it in your rooms. Would you be so good as bring me the bow of

your violin, and borrow for me anywhere a tuning-fork of as high a note as possible?"

The young man looked at Dr. Lefevre in puzzled inquiry; but the doctor was considering the electrical apparatus before him, and the young man set off on his errands. When he returned with the fiddle-bow and the tuning-fork, he saw Lefevre had placed the machine ready, with fresh chemicals in the vessels.

"Do you perceive my purpose?" asked Lefevre. He placed one handle of the apparatus in the unconscious patient's right hand, while he himself took hold of her left arm with his right hand, so that the inner side of his wrist was in contact with the inner side of hers; and then, to complete the circle of connection, he took in his left hand the other handle of the apparatus. "You don't understand?"

"I do not," answered the young man.

"We want a very rapid vibration—much more rapid than usual," said the doctor. "I can apply no more rapid vibration at present than that which the note of that tuning-fork will produce. I want you to sound the tuning-

fork with the fiddle-bow, and then apply the fork to this wire."

"Oh," said the young man, "I understand!"

"Now," said Lefevre, "you'd better call the Sister to set the electricity going."

The Sister came and took her place as before described—with her hands, that is, on the cylinder of the electrode, her fingers dipping over into the vessels of chemicals. She opened her eyes and smiled at sight of the fiddle-bow and tuning-fork.

"I am trying a new thing, Sister," said Lefevre, with a touch of severity. "I do not need you, I do not wish you, to exert yourself this time; I only wish you to keep that position, and to be calm. Maintain your composure, and attend. . . . Now!" said he, addressing the young man.

The fiddle-bow was drawn across the tuning-fork, and the fork applied with its thrilling note to the conducting wire which Lefevre held. The wire hummed its vibration, and electricity tingled wildly through Lefevre's nerves. . . . There was an anxious, breathless pause for

some seconds, and fear of failure began to contract the doctor's heart.

"Take your hands away, Sister," said he. Then, turning to his assistant, "Apply that to the other wire," said he; and dropping his own wire, he put his hand over the cylinder, with his fingers dipping into the vessel from which the other wire sprang. When the wire hummed under the tuning-fork and the vibration thrilled again, instantly he felt as if an inert obstruction had been removed. The vibratory influence whirled wildly through him, there was a pause of a second or two (which seemed to him many minutes in duration), and then suddenly a kind of rigor passed upon the form and features of his patient, as if each individual nerve and muscle were being threaded with quick wire, a sharp rush of breath filled her chest, and she opened her eyes and closed them again.

"That will do," said Lefevre in a whisper, and, releasing his hands, he sank back in a chair. "It's a success," said he, turning his eyes with a thin smile on the house-physician, and then closing them in a deadly exhaustion.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AT THE BEDSIDE OF THE DOCTOR.

For the first time since he had come into the world Dr. Lefevre was that night attended by another doctor. The resident assistant-physician took him home to Savile Row in a cab, assisted him to bed, and sat with him a while after he had administered a tonic and soporific. Then he left him in charge of the silent man in black, whom he reassured by saying that there was no danger; that his master had a magnificent constitution; that he was only exhausted—though exhausted very much; and that all he needed was rest, sleep, nourishment, —sleep above all.

Lefevre slept the night through like a child, and awoke refreshed, though still very weak.

He was bewildered with his condition for a moment or two, till he recalled the moving and exhausting experiences of the day before, and then he was suffused with a glow of elation,—elation which was not all satisfaction in the successful performance of a new experiment, nor in a good deed well done. His friend came to see him early, to anticipate the risk of his rising. He insisted that he should keep his bed, for that day at least, if not for a second and a third day. He reported that the patient was doing well; that she had asked with particularity, and had been informed with equal particularity, concerning the method of her recovery, upon which she was much bemused, and asked to see her physician.

"It is a pity she was told," said Lefevre; "it is not usual to tell a patient such a thing, and I meant it to be kept secret, at least till it was better established." But for all his protest he was again suffused with that new sense of inward joy.

Alone, and lying idle in bed, it was but natural—it was almost inevitable—that the

doctor's thoughts should begin to run upon the strange events and suspicions of the past two days; and their current setting strongly in one channel, made him long to be resolved whether or no the Man of the Crowd, the author of yesterday's outrage, the "M. Dolaro" of whom the detective had gone in search, and who, if captured, would be certainly overwhelmed with contumely, if not with punishment,—whether or not that strange creature was Julius's father, or any relation at all of Julius. He was not clear how he could well put the matter to Julius, since he so evidently shrank from discourse upon it, yet he thought some kind of certainty might be arrived at from an interview with him. On the chance of his having returned to his chambers, he called for pen and paper and wrote a note, asking him to look in, as he would be resting all day. "Try to come," he urged; "I have something important to speak about."

This he sent by the trusty hand of his man in black; and by mid-day Julius was announced. He came in confident, and bright as sunshine

(Lefevre thought he had never seen him looking more serene); but suddenly the sunshine was beclouded, and Julius ceased to be himself, and became a restless, timorous kind of creature, like a bird put in a cage under the eye of his captor.

"What?" he cried when he entered, with an eloquent gesture. "Lazying in bed on such a day as this? What does this mean?" But when he observed the pallor and weakness of Lefevre's appearance, he paused abruptly, refrained from the hand stretched out to greet him, and exclaimed in a tone of something like terror, "Good heavens! Are you ill?" A paleness, a shudder, and a dizziness passed upon him as if he sickened. "May I," he said, "open the window?"

"Certainly, Julius," said Lefevre, in surprise and alarm. "Do you feel ill?"

"No—no," said Julius from the window, where he stood letting the air play upon his face, and speaking as if he had to put considerable restraint upon himself. "I—I am unfortunately, miserably constituted: I cannot

help it. I cannot bear the sight of illness, or lowness of health even. It appals me; it—it horrifies me with a quite instinctive horror; it deadens me."

Lefevre, whose abundant sympathy and vitality went out instinctively to succor and bless the weak and the ill, was inexpressibly shocked and offended by this confession of what to his sense appeared selfish cowardice and inhumanity. He had again and again heard it said, and he had with pleasure assented to the opinion, that Julius was a rare, finely-strung being, with such pure and glowing health that he shrank from contact with, or from the sight of, pain or ill-health, and even from their discussion; but now that the singularity of Julius's organization impinged upon his own experience, now that he saw Julius shrink from himself, he was shocked and offended. Julius, on his part, was pitiably moved. He kept away from the bed; he fidgeted to and fro, looking at this thing and that, without a sparkle of interest in his eye, yet all with his own peculiar grace.

"You wanted to speak to me," he said. "Do

you mind saying what you have to say and letting me go?"

"I reckoned upon your staying to lunch," said Lefevre.

"I can't!—I can't! . . . Very sorry, my dear Lefevre, but I really can't! Forgive what seems my rudeness. It distresses me that at such a time as this my sensations are so acute. But I cannot help it!—I cannot!"

"You have been in the country,—have you not?" said Lefevre, beginning with a resolve to get at something.

"I have just come back," said Julius. "My man told me you had called."

"Yes. My mother wrote in a state of great anxiety about you, and asked me to go and look at you. She said that she and my sister had seen a good deal of you lately; that you began to look unwell, and then ceased to appear, and she was afraid you might be ill."

This was put forth as an invitation to Julius to expound not only his own situation, but also his relations with Lady and Miss Lefevre, but Julius took no heed of it. He merely said,

"No; I was not ill. I only wanted a little change to refresh me,"—and walked back to the window to lave himself in the air.

"Well," continued Lefevre, "since I called to see you, I have had an adventure or two. You never look at a newspaper except for the weather, and so it is probable you do not know that I had brought to me yesterday afternoon another strange case like that of the young officer a month ago,—a similar case, but worse."

"Worse?" exclaimed Julius, dropping into the chair by the window, and glancing, as a less preoccupied observer than the doctor would have remarked, with a wistful desire at the door.

"Much worse—though, I believe, from the same hand," said Lefevre. "A lady this time, —titularly and really a lady,— Lady Mary Fane, the daughter of Lord Rivercourt."

"Oh, good heavens!" exclaimed Julius, and there were manifest so keen a note of apprehension in his voice and so deep a shade of apprehension on his face, that Lefevre could not but note them and confirm himself in his

suspicion of the intimate bond of connection between him and the author of the outrage. He pitied Julius's distress, and hurried through the rest of his revelation, careless of the result he had sought.

"It may prove," said he, "a far more serious affair than the other. Lord Rivercourt is not the man to sit quietly under an outrage like that."

Julius astonished him by demanding, "What *is* the outrage? Has the lady given an account of it? What does she accuse the man of?"

"She has not spoken yet,—to me, at least," said Lefevre; "and I don't know what the outrage can be called, but I am sure Lord Rivercourt—and he is a man of immense influence—will move heaven and earth to give it a legal name, and to get it punishment. There is a detective on the man's track now."

"Oh!" said Julius. "Well, it will be time enough to discuss the punishment when the man is caught. Now, if that is all your news." he added hurriedly, "I think——" He took

up his hat, and was as if going to the door.

"It is not quite all," said the doctor, and Julius went back to the window, with his hat in his hand.

"I wonder," he broke out, "if we shall ever be simple enough and intelligent enough to perceive that real wickedness—the breaking of any of the laws of Nature, I mean (or, if you prefer to say so, the laws of God)—is best punished by being left to itself? Outraged nature exacts a severe retribution! But you were going to say——?"

"The night before last," continued Lefevre, determined to be brief and succinct, "I was walking in the Strand, and I could not help observing a man who fulfilled completely the description given of the author of this case and my former one."

"Well?"

"That is not all. When I caught sight of his face I was completely amazed; for—I must tell you—it looked for all the world like you grown old, or, as I said to myself at the time, like a death-mask of you."

"You—you saw that?" exclaimed Julius, leaning against the window with a sudden look of terror which Lefevre was ashamed to have seen: it was like catching a glimpse of Julius's poor naked soul. "And you thought——?" continued Julius.

"You shall hear. Dr. Rippon—you remember the old doctor?—had a sight of a man in the Strand the night before, who, he believes, was his old friend Courtney that he thought dead, and who, I believe, was the man I saw."

Lefevre stopped. There was a pause, in which Julius put his head out of the window, as if he had a mind to be gone that way. Then he turned with a marked control upon himself.

"Really, Lefevre," said he, "this is the queerest stuff I've heard for a long time! This is hallucination with a vengeance! I don't like to apply such a tomfool word to anything, but observe how all this has come about. An excellent old gentleman, who has been dining out or something, has a glimpse at night, on a crowded pavement, of a man who looks like a

friend of his youth. Very well. The excellent old gentleman tells you of that, and it impresses you. *You* walk on the same pavement the next evening—I won't emphasize the fact of its being after dinner, though I daresay it was—— "

"It was."

"—— *You* have a glimpse of a man who looks—well, something like me; and you instantly conclude, 'Ah! the Courtney person—the friend of Dr. Rippon's youth!—and, surely, some relative of my friend Julius!' Next day this hospital case turns up, and because the description of its author, given by more or less unobservant persons, fits the person you saw, *argal*, you jump to the conclusion that the three are one! Is your conclusion clear upon the evidence? Is it inevitable? Is it necessary? Is it not forced?"

"Well," began Lefevre.

"It is bad detective business," broke in Julius, "though it may be good friendship. You have thought there was trouble in this for me, and you wished to give me warning of it.

But—*que diable vas-tu faire dans cette galere?* You are the best friend in the world, and whenever I am in trouble—and who knows? who knows? 'Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward'—I may ask of you both your friendship and your skill. One thing I ask of you here: don't speak of me as you see me now, thus miserably moved, to any one! Now I must go. Good-bye." And before Lefevre could find another word, Julius had opened the door and was gone.

"If it moves him like that," said the doctor to himself, through his bewilderment, "there must be something worse in it—God forgive me for thinking so!—than I have ever imagined."

# CHAPTER VII.

## CONTAINS A LOVE INTERLUDE.

NEXT day Lefevre learned that the police had been again baffled in their part of the inquiry. The detective had contrived to trace his man—though not till the morning after the event—to the St. Pancras Hotel, where he had dined in private, and gone to bed early, and whence he had departed on foot before any one was astir, to catch, it was surmised, the first train. But, wherever he had gone, it was just as in the former case: from the time the hotel door had closed on his cloaked figure, all trace of him was lost.

Nor could Lady Mary Fane add anything of moment to what Lefevre already knew or guessed. Her account of her adventure (which she gave him in her father's house, whither she had been removed on the third day) was as

follows: She was returning home from St. Thomas's Hospital, dressed according to her habit when she went there; she had crossed Westminster Bridge, and was proceeding straight into St. James's Park, when she became aware of a man walking in the same direction as herself, and at the same pace. She casually noted that he looked like a distinguished foreigner, and that he had about him an indefinable suggestion of death clinging with an eager, haggard hope to life,—a suggestion which melted the heart of the beholder, as if it were the mute appeal of a drowning sailor. She was stirred to pity; and when he suddenly appeared to reel from weakness, she stepped out to him on an overwhelming impulse, laid a steadying hand on his arm, and asked what ailed him. He turned on her a pair of wonderful dark eyes, which were animal-like in their simple, direct appeal, and their moist softness. He begged her to lead him aside into a path by which few would pass: he disliked being stared at. Thinking only of him as a creature in sickness and distress, she

obeyed without a thought for herself. She helped him to sit down upon a bench, and sat down by him and felt his pulse. He looked at her with an open, kindly eye, with a simple-seeming gratitude, which held her strangely (though she only perceived that clearly on looking back). He said to her suddenly,—

"There was a deep, mystical truth in the teaching of the Church to its children—that they should prefer in their moments of human weakness to pray to the Virgin-mother; for woman is always man's best friend."

She looked in his face, wondering at him still with her finger on his pulse, when she felt an unconsciousness come over her, not unlike "the thick, sweet mystery of chloroform;" and she knew no more till she opened her eyes in the hospital bed. "Revived by you," she said to Lefevre.

He inquired further, as to her sensations before unconsciousness, and she replied in these striking words: "I felt as if I were strung upon a complicated system of threads, and as if they tingled and tingled, and grew

tighter to numbness." That answer, he saw, was kindred to the description given by the young officer of his condition. It was clear that in both cases the nerves had been seriously played upon; but for what purpose? What was the secret of the stranger's endeavor? What did he seek?—and what find? To these questions no satisfactory answer would come for the asking, so that in his impatience he was tempted to break through the severe self-restraint of science, and let unfettered fancy find an answer.

But, most of all, he longed to see close to him the man whom the police sought for in and out, to judge for himself what might be the method and the purpose of his strange outrages. He scarcely desired his capture, for he thought of the possible results to Julius, and yet—— Day after day passed, and still the man was unfound, and very soon a change came over Lefevre's life, which lifted it so far above the plane of his daily professional experience, that all speculation about the mysterious "M. Dolaro," and his probable relation to Julius, fell

for a time into the dim background. The doctor had been calling daily in Carlton Terrace to see his patient, when, on a certain memorable day, he intimated to her father that she was so completely recovered that there was no need of his calling on her professionally again. The old lord, looking a little flustered, asked him if he could spare a few minutes' conversation, and led him into his study.

"My dear Lefevre," said he, "I am at a loss how to make you any adequate return for what you have done for my daughter. Money can't do it; no, nor my friendship either, though you are so kind as to say so. But I have an idea, which I think it best to set before you frankly. You are a bachelor: it is not good to be a bachelor," he went on, laying his hand affectionately on the doctor's arm, and flushing —old man of the world though he was—flushing to the eyes. "What—what do you think of my daughter? I mean, not as a doctor, but as a man?"

Lefevre was not in his first youth, and he had had his admirations for women in his time,

as all healthy men must have, but yet he was made as deliriously dizzy as if he were a boy by his guess at what Lord Rivercourt meant.

"Why," he stammered, "I think her the most beautiful, intelligent, and—and attractive woman I know."

"Yes," said her father, "I believe she is pretty well in all these ways. But—and you see I frankly expose my whole position to you—what would you think of her for a wife?"

"Frankly, then," said Lefevre, "I find I have admired her from the beginning of this, but I had no notion of letting my admiration go farther, because I conceived that she was quite beyond my hopes."

"My dear fellow," said Lord Rivercourt, "you have relieved me and delighted me immensely. I know no man that I would like so well for a son-in-law. And, after all, it is only fitting that the life you have saved with such risk to yourself—oh, I know all about it—should be devoted to making yours happy. And—and I understand from her mother that Mary is quite of the same opinion herself.

Now, will you go and speak to her at once, or will you wait till another day? You will have to decide that," said he, with a smile, "not only as lover, but as doctor."

Lefevre hesitated for but an instant; for what true, manly lover would have decided to withdraw till another day when the door to his mistress was held open to him?

"I'll see her now," he said.

Lord Rivercourt led the doctor back to his daughter, and left him with her. There were some moments of chilling doubt and cold uncertainty, and then came a rush of warm feeling at the bidding of a shy glance from Lady Mary. He bent over her and murmured he scarcely knew what, but he heard clearly and with a divine ecstasy a softly-whispered "*Yes!*" which thrilled in his heart for days and months afterwards, and then he turned to him her face, her beautiful face illumined with love, and kissed it: between two who had been drawn together as they had, what words were needed, or what could poor words convey?

About an hour later he walked to Savile

Row to dress and return for dinner. He walked, because he felt surcharged with life.

He desired peace and goodwill among men; he pitied with all his soul the weary and the broken whom he met, and wondered with regret that men should get irremediably involved in the toils of their own misdeeds; he was profuse with coppers, and even small silver, to the wretched waifs of society who swept the crossings he had to take on his triumphant way; he would even have bestowed forgiveness on his greatest enemy if he had met him then; —for the divine joy of love was singing in his heart and raising him to the serene and glorious empyrean of heroes and gods. Oh matchless magic of the human heart, which confounds all the hypotheses of science, and flouts all its explanations!

It was that evening when he and Lady Mary sat in sweet converse that she said to him these words, which he hung forever after about his heart—

"Surely, never before did a man win a wife as you have won me! You made me well by

putting your own life into me; so what could I do but give you the life that was already your own!"

Thus day followed day on golden wings: Lefevre in the morning occupied with the patients that thronged his consulting room; in the afternoon dispensing healing, and, where healing was impossible, cheerfulness and courage, in his hospital wards; and in the evening finding inspiration and strength in the company of Lady Mary—for her love was to him better than wine. All who went to him in those days found him changed, and in a sense glorified. He had always been considerate and kind; but the weakness, the folly, and the wickedness of poor human nature, which were often laid bare to his searching scrutiny, had frequently plunged him into a welter of despondency and shame, out of which he would cry, "Alas for God's image! Alas for the temple of the Holy Ghost!" But in those days it seemed as if disease and death appeared to him mere trivial accidents of life, with the result that no "case," however bad, was sent away empty of hope.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### STRANGE SCENES IN CURZON STREET.

It happened, however, that just when all the bays and creeks of Dr. Lefevre's attention were occupied, as by a springtide, with the excellent, the divine, fortune that had come to him,—when he seemed thus most completely divorced from anxious speculation about Julius Courtney and "M. Dolaro," his attention was suddenly and in an unexpected fashion hurried again to the mystery. The doctor had not seen Julius since the day he had received him in his bedroom—it must be admitted he had not sought to see him—but he had heard now and then from his mother, in casual notes and postscripts, that Courtney continued to call in Curzon Street.

On a certain evening Lady Lefevre gave a dinner and a reception, designed to introduce

Lady Mary to the Lefevre circle. Julius was not at dinner (at which only members of the two families sat down), but he was expected to appear later. It is probable, under the circumstances, that Lefevre would not have remarked the absence of Julius from the dinner-table, had it not been for Nora. He was painfully struck with her appearance and demeanor. She seemed to have lost much of her beautiful vigor and bloom of health, like a flower that has been for some time cut from its stem; and she, who had been wont to be ready and gay of speech, was now completely silent, yet without constraint, and as if wrapped in a dream.

"What has come over Nora?" asked Lefevre of his mother when they had gone to the drawing-room.

"Ah," said Lady Lefevre, "you have noticed something, have you? Do you find her very changed, then?"

"Very much changed."

"It's this attachment of hers to Julius. I want to have a talk with you about it present-

ly. She seems scarcely to live when he is not with her. She sits like that always when he is gone, and appears only to dream and wait,—wait with her life as if suspended till he comes back."

"Has it, indeed, got so far at that?" said her son with concern. "I had better have a word or two with Julius about it."

Just then Mr. Courtney was announced, and there were introductions on this side and on that. He turned to be introduced to Lady Mary, and for the time Lefevre forgot his sister, so engrossed was he with the altered aspect of his friend. He looked worn and weary, like a student when the dawn finds him still at his books. Lady Lefevre expressed that in her question—

"Why, Julius, have you taken to hard work? You're not looking well, and we have not seen you for days."

A flush rose to tinge his cheek, but it sank as soon as it appeared.

"I have been out of sorts," said he; "that is all. And you have not seen me because I

have bought a yacht and have been trying it on the river."

"A yacht!" exclaimed Lefevre. "I did not know you cared for the water."

"*You* know me," laughed Julius in his own manner, "and not know that I care for everything!" So saying, he laid his hand on Lefevre's arm. The act was not remarkable, but its result was, for Lefevre felt as if it were a blow, and stood astonished at it.

During this interchange of words Lefevre (with Lady Mary) had been moving with Julius, as he drew off across the room to greet Nora, and the doctor could not help observing how the attention of all the company was bent on his friend. Before his entrance all had been chatting or laughing easily with their neighbors; now they seemed as constrained and belittled as is a crowd of courtiers when a royal personage appears in their midst. In truth, Julius at all times had a grace, an ease, and a distinction of manner not unworthy of a prince; but on this occasion he had an added something, an indefinable attraction which strangely

held the attention. Lefevre, therefore, was scarcely surprised (though, perhaps, a trifle disappointed, considering that he was a lover) to note that Lady Mary was regarding Julius with a silent, wide-eyed fascination. They convoyed Julius to Nora, and then withdrew, leaving them together.

There were several fresh arrivals and new introductions to Lady Mary. These, Lefevre observed, she went through half-absently, still turning her eyes on Julius in the intervals with open and intense interest.

"Well," said Lefevre at length, smiling in spite of a twinge of jealousy, "what do you think, now you have seen him, of the fascinating Julius?"

She gave him no answering smile, but replied as if she painfully withdrew herself from abstraction,—"I—I don't know. He is very interesting and very strange. I—I can't make him out. I don't know."

Then Lefevre turned his eyes on Julius, and became aware of something strained in the relations of his sister and his friend. He could

not forbear to look, and as he continued looking he instinctively felt that a passionate scene was being silently enacted between them. They sat markedly apart. Nora's bosom heaved with suppressed emotion, and her look, when raised to Julius, plied him with appeal or reproach—Lefevre could not determine which. The doctor's interest almost drew him over to them, when Lady Lefevre appeared and said to Julius—

"Do go to the piano, Julius, and wake us up."

Nora put out her hand with a gesture which plainly meant, "Don't! . . . Don't leave me!"

But Julius rose, and as he turned (the doctor noted) he bent an inscrutable look of pain on Nora. He sat down at the piano and struck a wild, sad chord. Instantly it became as if the people in the room were the instrument upon which he played,—as if the throbbing human hearts around him were directly connected by invisible strings with the ivory keys that pulsed beneath his fingers. What was the music he played no one knew, no one cared, no one in-

quired: each individual person was held and played upon, and was allowed no pause for reflection or criticism. The music carried all away as on the flood of time, showing them, on one hand, sunshine and beauty and joy, and all the pride of life; and, on the other, darkness and cruelty, despair, and defiance, and death. It might have been, on the one hand, the music with which Orpheus tamed the beasts; and on the other, that which Æschylus arranged to accompany the last act of his tragedy of "Prometheus Bound." There was, however, no clear distinction between the joyous airs and the sombre: all were wrought and mingled into an exciting and bewildering atmosphere of melody, which thrilled the heart and maddened the brain. But as the music continued, its joyous strains died out; the instrument cried aloud in horror and pain, as if the vulture of Prometheus were tearing at its vitals; darkness seemed to descend upon the room—a darkness alive with the sighs and groans, the disillusions and tears, of lost souls. The men sat transfixed with agony and dread, the women were caught in

the wild clutches of hysteria, and Courtney himself was as if possessed with a frenzy: his features were rigid, his eyes dilated, and his hair rose and clung in wavy locks, so that he seemed a very Gorgon's head. The only person apparently unmoved was old Dr. Rippon, whose pale, gaunt form rose in the background, sinister and calm as Death!

The situation was at its height, when a black cat (a pet of Miss Lefevre's) suddenly leaped on the top of the piano with a canary in its mouth, and in the presence of them all, laid its captive before Julius Courtney. The music ceased with a dissonant crash. With a cry Julius rose and laid his hand on the cat's neck: to the general amazement the cat lay down limp and senseless, and the little golden bird fluttered away. Then the sobs of the women, hitherto controlled, broke out, and the murmurs of the men.

"O Julius! Julius! what have you done?" cried Nora, sweeping up to him in an ecstasy of emotion.

He caught her in his arms, when with a

strange cry—a strained kind of laugh with a hysterical catch in it—she sank fainting on his breast. With a sharp exclamation of pain and fear he bore her swiftly from the room (he was near the door) and into a little conservatory that opened upon the staircase, casting his eyes upon Lefevre as he went, and saying, "Come! come quick!" Lefevre then woke to the fact that he had been fixedly regarding this last strange scene, while Lady Mary clung trembling to his arm. He hurried out after Julius, followed by Lady Mary and his mother.

"Take her!" cried Julius, standing away from Nora, and looking white and terror-stricken. "Restore her! Oh, I must not!—I dare not touch her!"

With nimble accustomed fingers Lady Mary undid Nora's dress, while the doctor applied the remedies usual in hysterical fainting. Nora opened her eyes and fixed them upon Julius.

"O Julius, Julius!" she cried. Do not leave me! Come near me! Oh! . . . I think I am going to die!"

"My love! my life! my soul!" said Julius,

stretching out his hands to her, but approaching no nearer, "I cannot—I must not touch you! No, no! I dare not!"

"O Julius!" said she. "Are you afraid of me? How can I harm you?"

"Nora, my life! I am afraid of myself! You would not harm me, but I would harm you! Ah, I know it now only too well!"

Then, as she closed her eyes again, she said, "I had better die!"

"No, you must not die!" he exclaimed. "Your time is not yet! Yes, you will live!—live! But I must be cut off—though not forever—from the sweetest and dearest, the noblest and purest of all God's creatures!"

In the meantime Lefevre had been examining his sister with closer scrutiny. He raised her eyelid and looked at her eye; he pricked her on the arm and wrist; and then he turned to Julius.

"Julius," said he, "what does this mean?"

"It means," answered Julius, covering his face with his hands, "that I am of all living things the most accurst!" Then, with a cry of

horror and anguish, he fled from the room and down the stairs.

Lady Lefevre followed him in a flutter of fear. Presently she returned, and said, in answer to a look from her son, "He snatched his hat and coat, and was gone before I came up with him."

Without a word Lefevre set himself to recover his sister, and in half an hour she was well enough to walk with Lady Mary's assistance to bed.

The guests, meanwhile, had departed, all but two or three intimates; and in less than an hour Dr. Lefevre was returning home in the Fane carriage. Lord Rivercourt and he talked of the strange events of the evening, while Lady Mary leaned back and half-absently listened. They were proceeding thus along Piccadilly, when she suddenly caught the doctor's arm and exclaimed—

"Oh! Look! The very man I met in the Park! I am sure of it! I can never forget the face!"

Lefevre, alert on the instant, looked to recog-

nize Hernando Courtney, the Man of the Crowd: he saw only the back of a person in a loose cape and a slouch hat turning in at the gateway of the Albany courtyard. In flashes of reflection these questions arose: Who could he be but Hernando Courtney?—and where could he be going but to Julius's chambers? Julius, therefore (whose own conduct had been that night so extraordinary), must be familiar with his whole mysterious course, and consequently with the peril he was in. Before Lefevre could out of his perplexity snatch a resolution, Lord Rivercourt had pulled the cord to stop the coachman. The coachman, however, having received orders to drive home, was driving at a goodly pace, and it was only on a second summons through the cord that he slackened speed, and obeyed his master's direction to "draw up by the kerb."

"I'll get out," said Lefevre, "and look after him. You'd better get Mary home; she's not very strong yet, and she has been upset to-night."

He put himself thus forward for another

reason besides,—on the impulse of his friendship for Julius, without considering whether, in the event of an arrest and an exposure, he could do anything to shield Julius from shame and pain.

He got out, saying his adieus, and the carriage drove on. He found himself well past the Albany. He hurried back, nerved by the desire to encounter Julius's visitor, and at the same time by the hope that he would not. In his heart was a turmoil of feeling, to the surface of which continued to rise pity for Julius. The events of the evening had forced him to the conclusion that Julius possessed the same singular, magnetic, baleful influence on men and women as his putative father Hernando; but Julius's burst of agony, when Nora lay overcome, had declared to him that till then he had scarcely been aware of the destructive side of his power. All resentment, therefore, all sense of offence and suspicion which had lately begun to arise in his mind, was swallowed up in pity for his afflicted friend. His chief desire, now that he seemed reduced to the level of suffering

humanity, was to give him help and counsel.

Thus he entered the Albany, and passed the porter. The lamps in the flagged passage were little better than luminous shadows in the darkness, and the hollow silence re-echoed the sound of his hurried steps. No one was to be seen or heard in front of him. He came to the letter which marked Julius's abode. He looked into the gloomy doorway, and resolved he would see and speak to Julius in any case. He passed into the gloom and knocked at Julius's door. After a pause the door was opened by Jenkins. Lefevre could not well make out the expression of the serving-man's face, but he was satisfied that his voice was shaken as by a recent shock.

"I wish to see Mr. Courtney," said Lefevre, in the half hope that Jenkins would say, "Which Mr. Courtney?"

"Not at home, sir," said Jenkins in his flurried voice, and prepared to shut the door.

"Not at home, Jenkins? You don't mean that!"

"Oh, it's you, Dr. Lefevre, sir. Mr. Courtney is not at home, but perhaps he will see

you, sir! I hope he will; for he don't seem to me at all well."

"But if he is engaged, Jenkins——?"

"Oh, sir, you know what 'not-at-home' means," answered Jenkins. "It means anything or nothing. Will you step into the drawing-room, sir, while I inquire? Mr. Courtney is in his study."

"Thank you, Jenkins," said the doctor; "I'll wait where I am."

Jenkins returned with deep concern on his face. "Mr. Courtney's compliments, sir," said he, "and he is very sorry he cannot see you to-night. It is a pity, sir," he added, in a burst of confidence "for he don't seem well. He's a-settin' there with the lamp turned down, and his face in his hands."

"Is he alone, then?" asked the doctor.

"O yes, sir," answered Jenkins, in manifest surprise.

"Has nobody been to see him since he came in?" "No, sir, nobody," said Jenkins, in wider surprise than before.

It appeared to Lefevre that his friend must

be sitting alone with the terrible discovery he had that night made of himself. His heart, therefore, urged him to go in and take him by the hand, and give what help and comfort he could.

"I think," said he to Jenkins, "I'll try and have a word with him."

"Yes, sir," said Jenkins, and led the way to the study. He tapped at the door, and then turned the handle; but the door remained closed.

"Who is there?" asked a weary voice within, which scarce sounded like the voice of Julius.

"I—Lefevre," said the doctor, putting Jenkins aside. "May not I come in? I want a friendly word with you."

"Forgive me, Lefevre," said the voice, "that I do not let you in. I am very busy at present."

"You are alone," said Lefevre, "are you not?"

"Alone," said Julius; "yes, all alone!" There was a melting note of sadness in the words which went to the doctor's heart.

"My dear Julius," said he, "I think I know what's troubling you. Don't you think a talk with me might help you?"

"You are very good, Lefevre." (That was an unusual form of speech to come from Julius.) "I shall come to your house in a few minutes, if you will allow me."

"Do," answered Lefevre, for the moment completely satisfied. "Do!" And he turned away.

But when Jenkins had closed the outer door upon him, doubts arose. Ought he not to have insisted on seeing whether Julius was in truth alone in the study? And why could they not have had their talk there as well as in Savile Row? These doubts, however, he thrust down with the promise to himself that, if Julius did not come to him within half an hour, he would return to him. Yet he had not gone many steps before an unworthy suspicion shot up and arrested him: Suppose Julius had got rid of him to have the opportunity of sending a mysterious companion away unseen? But Jenkins had said he had let no one in, and it

was shameful to suspect both master and man of lying. Yet Lady Mary Fane had distinctly recognized the man who passed into the Albany courtyard: had he merely passed through on his unceasing pursuit of something unknown? or were father and son somehow aware of each other? Between this and that his mind became a jumble of the wildest conjectures. He imagined many things, but never conceived that which soon showed itself to be the fact.

## CHAPTER IX.

### AN APPARITION AND A CONFESSION.

He let himself in with his latch-key, went into his dining-room, and sat down, dressed as he was, to wait. He listened through minute after minute for the expected step. The window was open (for the midsummer night was warm), and all the sounds of belated and revelling London floated vaguely in the air. Twelve o'clock boomed softly from Westminster, and made the heavy atmosphere drowsily vibrate with the volume of the strokes. The reverberation of the last had scarcely died away when a light, measured footfall made him sit up. It came nearer and nearer, and then, after a moment's hesitation, sounded on his own doorstep. With that there came the tap of a cane on the window. With thought and expectation resolutely suspended, Lefevre swung out of the

room and to the hall-door. He opened it, and stood and gazed. The light of the hall-lamp fell upon a figure, the sight of which sent the blood in a gush to his heart, and pierced him with horror. He expected Julius, and he looked on the man whom he had followed on the crowded pavements some weeks before,—the man whom the police had long sought for ineffectually!

"Won't you let me in, Lefevre?" said the man.

The doctor stood speechless, with his eyes fixed: the face and dress of the person before him were those of Hernando Courtney, but the voice was the voice of Julius, though it sounded strange and distant, and bore an accent as of death. Lefevre was involved in a wild turmoil and horror of surmise, too appalling to be exactly stated to himself; for he shrank with all his energy from the conclusion to which he was being forced. He turned, however, upon the request for admission, and led the way into the dining-room, letting his visitor close the door and follow.

"Lefevre," said the strange voice, "I have come to show myself to you, because I know you are a true-hearted friend, and because I think you have that exquisite charity that can forgive all things."

"*Show myself!*" . . . As Lefevre listened to the strange voice and looked at the strange person, the suspicion came upon him—What if he were but regarding an Illusion? He had read in some of his mystical and magical writers, that men gifted with certain powers could project to a distance eidola or phantasms of varying likeness to themselves: might not this be such a mocking phantasm of Julius? He drew his hand across his eyes, and looked again: the figure still sat there. He put out his hand to test its substantiality, and the voice cried in a keen pitch of terror—

"Don't touch me!—for your own sake! . . . Why, Lefevre, do you look so amazed and overcome? Is not my wretched secret written in my face?"

"And you are really Julius Courtney?" asked Lefevre, at length finding utterance, with meas-

ured emphasis, and in a voice which he hardly recognized as his own.

"I am Julius Courtney——"

He paused, for Lefevre had put his head in his hands, shaken with a silent paroxysm of grief. It wrung the doctor's heart, as if in the person that sat opposite him, all that was noblest and most gracious in humanity were disgraced and overthrown.

"Yes," continued the voice, "I am Julius; there is no other Courtney that I know of, and soon there will be none at all." The doctor listened, but he could not endure to look again. "I am dying—I have been dying for a dozen years, and for a dozen years I have resisted and overcome death; now I surrender. I have come to my period. I shall never enter your house again. I have only come now to confess myself, and to ask a last favor of you—a last token of friendship."

"I will freely do what I can for you, Julius," said the doctor, still without looking at him, "though I am too overcome, too bewildered, yet to say much to you."

"Thank you. You will hear my story and understand. It contains a secret which I, like a blind fool, have only used for myself, but which you will apply for the wide benefit of mankind. The request I have to make of you is small, but it may seem extraordinary,—be my companion for twelve hours. I cannot talk to you here, enclosed and oppressed with streets of houses. Come with me for a few hours on the water; I have a fancy to see the sun rise for the last time over the sea. I have my yacht ready near London Bridge, and a boat waiting at the steps by Cleopatra's Needle; a cab will soon take us there. Will you come?"

Lefevre did not look up. The voice of Julius sounded like an appeal from the very abode of death. Then he glanced in spite of himself in his face, and was moved and melted to unreserved compassion by the strained weariness of his expression—the open, luminous wistfulness of his eyes.

"Yes; I'll go," said he. "But can't I do something for you first? Let me consider your case."

"There's nothing now to be done for me, Lefevre," said Julius, shaking his head. "You will perceive that when you have heard me out."

The doctor went to find his man and tell him that he was going out for the night to attend on an urgent case. When he returned he stood a moment touched with misgiving. He thought of Lady Mary—he thought of his mother and sister. Ought he not to leave some hint behind him of the strange adventure upon which he was about to embark, and which might end he knew not how or where? Julius was observing him, and seemed to divine his doubt.

"You need have no hesitation," said he. "I ask you only for twelve hours. You can easily get back here by noon to-morrow. There is a south-west wind blowing, with every prospect of settled weather. I am quite certain about it."

Fortified with that assurance, Lefevre put on a thicker overcoat and an old soft hat, turned out the lights in the dining-room and in the hall, closed the door with a slam, and stood with the new, the strange Julius in the street, fairly embarked upon his adventure. It was

only with an effort that he could realize he was in the company of one who had been a familiar friend. They walked towards Regent Street without speaking. At the corner of Savile Row they came upon a policeman, and Lefevre had a sudden thrill of fear lest his companion should, at length, be recognized and arrested. Courtney himself, however, appeared in no wise disturbed. In Regent Street he hailed a passing four-wheeler.

"Wouldn't a hansom be quicker? said Lefevre.

"It is better on your account," said Julius, "that we should sit apart."

When they entered the cab, Courtney ensconced himself in the remote corner of the other seat from Lefevre; and thus without another word they drove to the Embankment. At the foot of the steps by Cleopatra's Needle, they found a waterman and a boat in waiting. They entered the boat, Lefevre going forward while Julius sat down at the tiller. The waterman pulled out. The tide was ebbing, and they slipped swiftly down the dark river, with

broken reflections of lamps and lanterns on either bank streaming deep into the water like molten gold as they passed, and with tall buildings and chimney-shafts showing black against the calm night sky. Lefevre found it necessary at intervals to assure himself that he was not drifting in a dream, or that the ghastly, burning-eyed figure, wrapped in a dark cloak in the stern, was not a strange visitor from the nether world.

Soon after they had shot through London Bridge they were alongside a yacht almost in mid-stream. It was clear that all had been pre-arranged for Julius's arrival; for as soon as they were on board, the yacht (loosed from her upper mooring by the waterman who had brought them down the river) began to stand away.

"We had better go forward," said Courtney. "Are you warm enough?"

The doctor answered that he was. Courtney gave an order to one of the men, who went below and returned with a fur-lined coat which his master put on. That little incident gave a curious shock to Lefevre: it made him think

of the mysterious stranger who had sat down opposite the young officer in the Brighton train, and it showed him that he had not been completely satisfied that his friend Julius and the person he had been wont to think of as Hernando Courtney were one and the same.

They went forward to be free of the sail and its tackling. Courtney, wrapped in his extra, his fur-lined coat, pointing to a low folding-chair for Lefevre, threw himself on a heap of cordage. He looked around and above him, at the rippling, flashing water and the black hulls of ships, and at the serene, starlit heavens stretching over all.

"How wonderful!—how beautiful it all is!" he exclaimed. "All, all!—even the dullest and deadest-seeming things are vibrating, palpitating with the very madness of life! He set the world in my heart, and oh, how I loved!—how I loved the world!"

"It is a wonderful world," said Lefevre, trying to speak cheerfully; "and you will take delight in it again when this abnormal fit of depression is over."

"Never, Lefevre!—never, never!" said Courtney in strenuous tones. "I regret it deeply, bitterly, madly,—but yet I know that I have about done with it!"

"Julius," said Lefevre, "I have been so amazed and bewildered, that I have found little to say: I can scarcely believe that you are in very deed the Julius I have known for years. But now let me remind you I am your friend——"

"Thank you, Lefevre."

"——And I am ready to help you to the uttermost in this crisis, which I but dimly understand. Tell me about yourself, and let me see what I can do."

"You can do nothing," said Julius, sadly shaking his head. "Understand me; I am not going to state a case for diagnosis. Put that idea aside; I merely wish to confess myself to my friend."

"But surely," said Lefevre, "I may be your physician as well as your friend. As long as you have life there is hope of life."

"No, no, no, Lefevre! There is a depth of life—life on the lees—that is worse than death!

If I could retrace my steps to the beginning of this, taking my knowledge with me, then——! But no, I must go my appointed way, and face what is beyond. . . But let me tell you my story.

"You have heard something of my parentage from Dr. Rippon, I believe. My father was Spanish, and my mother was English. I think I was born without that sense of responsibility to a traditional or conventional standard which is called Conscience, and that sense of obligation to consider others as important as myself, which, I believe, they call Altruism. I do not know whether the lack of these senses had been manifest in my mother's family, but I am sure it had been in my father's. For generations it had been a law unto itself; none of its members had known any duty but the fulfilment of his desires; and I believe even that kind of outward conscience called Honor had scarcely existed for some of them. I had from my earliest recollection the nature of these ancestors: they, though dead, desired, acted, lived in me, with something of a difference, due to I know not what. Let me try to state the fact

as it appears to me looking back: I was for myself the one consciousness, the one person in the world, all else — trees, beasts, men and women, and what not—being the medium in which, and on which, I lived. I conceived of nothing around me but as existing to please, to amuse, to delight me, and if anything showed itself contrary to these ends, I simply avoided it. What I wished to do I did; what I wished to have I had; — and nothing else. I do not suppose that in these points I was different from most other children of wealthy parents. Where I differed, I believe, was in having a peculiarly sensitive, and at the same time admirably healthy, constitution of body, which induced a remarkable development of desire and gratification. I can hardly make you understand, I am sure I cannot make you feel—I myself cannot feel, I can only remember —what a bright natural creature I was when I was young."

"Don't I remember well," said Lefevre, "what you were like when I first met you in Paris?"

"Ah," said Julius, "the change had begun then,—the change that has brought me to this. I contemplate myself as I was before that with bitter envy and regret. I was as a being sprung fresh from the womb of primitive Nature. I delighted in Nature as a child delights in its mother, and I throve on my delight as a child thrives. I refused to go to school—and indeed little pressure was put upon me—to be drilled in the paces and hypocrisy of civilized mankind. I ran wild about the country; I became proficient in all bodily exercises; I fenced and wrestled and boxed; I leaped and swam; I rowed for days alone in a skiff; I associated with simple peasants, and with all kinds of animals; I delighted in air and water, and grass and trees: to me they were as much alive as beasts are. Oh, what an exquisite, abounding, unclouded pleasure life was! When I was hungry I ate; when I was thirsty I drank; when I was tired I slept; and when I woke I stretched myself like a giant refreshed. It was a pure joy to me in those days to close my fingers into a fist and see the beauty and firm-

ness of my muscles. When solemn, civilized people spoke to me of duty and work, I listened like an idiot. I had nothing in my consciousness to help me to understand them. I knew no more of duty than Crusoe on his island; and as for work, I had no ambition,—why, then, should I work? I read, of course; but I read because I liked it, not because I had tasks set me. I read everything that came in my way; and very soon all literature and science—all good poetry and romance, and all genuine science—came to mean for me a fine, orderly expression of nature and life. And religion, too, I felt as the ecstasy of nature. So I fed and flourished on the milk of life and the bread of life.

"But a time came when I longed to live deeper, and to get at the pith and marrow of life. I was over twenty when it was revealed to me in a noonday splendor and warmth of light, that the human is unspeakably the highest and most enthralling expression of life in all Nature. That discovery happened to me when I was in Morocco with my father, who died

there—no matter how—among those whom he liked to believe were his own people: my mother had died long before. I had considerable wealth at my command, and I began to live at the height of all my faculties; I lived in every nerve and at every pore.

"And then I began to perceive a reverse to the bounteous beauty and the overflowing life of Nature,—a threatening quality, a devouring faculty in her by which she fed the joyous abundance of her life. I saw that all activity, all the pleasant palpitation and titillation in the life of Nature and of Man, merely means that one living thing is feeding upon or is feeding another. I began to perceive that all the interest of life centres in this alter-devouring principle. I discovered, moreover, this strange point,—that the joy of life is in direct proportion to the rapidity with which we lose or surrender life."

"Yes," said Lefevre, "the giving of pleasure is always more exquisite and satisfactory than the getting it."

"I lost life," continued Julius, without noting

Lefevre's remark,—"I lost life,—vital force, nervous ether, electricity, whatever you choose to call it,—at an enormous rate, but I as quickly replenished my loss. I had revelled for some time in this deeper life of give and take before I discovered that this faculty of recuperation also was curiously and wonderfully active in me. Whenever I fell into a state of weakness, well-nigh empty of life, I withdrew myself from company, and dwelt for a little while with the simplest forms of Nature."

"But," asked Lefevre, "how did you get into such a low condition?"

"How? *I lived!*" said he with fervor. "*Yes; I lived:* that was how! I had always delighted in animals, .t then I began to find that when I caressed them they were not merely tamed, as they had been wont, but completely subdued; and I felt rapid and full accessions of life from contact with them. If I lay upon a bank of rich grass or wild flowers, I had to a slight extent the same revivifying sensation. The fable of Antæus was fulfilled in me. The constant recurrence and vigor of

this recuperation not only filled me with pride, but also set me thinking. I turned to medical science to find the secret of it. I entered myself as a student in Paris: it was then I met you. I read deeply, too, in the books of the mediæval alchemists and sages of Spain, which my father had left me. It came upon me in a clear flood of evidence that Nature and man are one and indivisible, being animated by one identical Energy or Spirit of Life, however various may be the material forms; and that all things, all creatures, according to the activity of their life, have the power of communicating, of giving or taking, this invisible force of life. It furthermore became clear to me that, though the force resides in all parts of a body, floating in every corpuscle of blood, yet its proper channels of circulation and communication are the nerves, so that as soon as a nerve in any one shape of life touches a nerve in any other, there is an instant tendency to establish in them a common level of the Force of Life. If I or you touch a man or woman with a finger, or clasp their hand, or embrace them

more completely, the tendency is at once set up, and the force seeks to flow, and, according to certain conditions, does flow, from one to another, evermore seeking to find a common level, —always, that is, in the direction of the greater need, or the greater capacity. I saw then that not only had I a greater storage capacity, so to say, than most men, but also, therefore, when exhaustion came, I had a more insistent need for replenishment, and a more violent shrinking at all times from any weak or unhealthy person who might even by chance contact make a demand on my store of life."

"And is that your secret?" asked Lefevre. "I have arrived in a different way at something like the same discovery."

"I know you have," said Julius. "But my peculiar secret is not that, though it is connected with it. I am growing very tired," said he, abruptly. "I must be quick, Lefevre," he continued in a hurried, weak voice of appeal; "grant me one little last favor to enable me to finish."

"Anything I can do I will, Julius," said Le-

fevre, suddenly roused out of the half-drowsiness which the soft night induced. He was held between alarm and fascination by the look which Julius bent on him.

"I am ashamed to ask, but you are full of life," said Julius: I am at the shallowest ebb. Just for one minute help me. Of your free-will submit yourself to me for but a moment. Will you do me that service?"

"Yes," said Lefevre, after an instant's hesitation; "certainly I will."

Julius half rose from his reclining position; he turned on Lefevre his wonderful eyes, which in the mysterious twilight that suffused the midsummer night burned with a surprising brilliance. Lefevre felt himself seized and held in their influence.

"Give me your hand," said Julius.

The doctor gave his hand, his eyes being still held by those of Julius, and instantly, as it seemed to him, he plunged, as a man dives into the sea, into a gulf of unconsciousness, from which he presently emerged with something like a gasp and with a tremulous sensation

about his heart. What had happened to him he did not know; but he felt slacker of fibre as if virtue had gone out of him, while Julius, when he spoke, seemed refreshed as by a draught of wine.

"How are you?" asked Julius. "For heaven's sake don't let me think that at the last I have troubled much the current of your life! Will you have something to eat and drink? There's wine and food below."

"Thank you, no" said Lefevre, "I am well enough, only a little drowsy."

"I am stronger," said Julius, but it will not last; so let me finish my story."

Then he continued. "Having explained to myself, in the way I have told you, the ease of my unwitting replenishment of force whenever I was brought low, I set myself to improve on my discovery. I saw before me a prospect of enjoyment of all the delights of life, deeper and more constant than most men ever know,—if I could only ensure to myself with absolute certainty a still more complete and rapid re-invigoration as often soever as I sank into ex-

haustion. I was quite sure that no energy of life is finer or fuller than the human at its best."

"Good God!" exclaimed Lefevre, turning away with an involuntary shudder.

"For heaven's sake!" cried Julius, "don't shrink from me now, or you will tempt me to be less frank than I have been. I wish to make full confession. I know, I see now, I have been cruelly, brutally selfish — as selfish as Nature herself!—none knows that better than I. But remember, in extenuation, what I have told you of my origin and my growth. And I had not the suspicion of a thought of injuring any one. Fool! fool! egregious fool that I was! I who understood most things so clearly did not guess that no creature, no being in the universe—god, or man, or beast—can indulge in arrogant, full, magnificent enjoyment without gathering and living in himself, squandering through himself, the lives of others, to their eternal loss and his own final ruin! But, as I said, I did not think, and it was not evident until recently, that I injured any one. I had

for a long time been aware that I had an unusual mesmeric or magnetic influence—call it what you will—over others. I cultivated that power in eye and hand, so that I was soon able to take any person at unawares whom I considered fit for my purpose, and subdue him or her completely to myself. Then after one or two failures I hit upon a method, which I perfected at length into entire simplicity, by which I was able to tap the nervous system and draw into myself as much as ever I needed of the abounding force of life, without leaving any sign which even the most skilful doctor could detect."

"Julius, you sicken me!" exclaimed Lefevre. "I am a doctor, but you sicken me!"

"I explain myself so in detail," said Julius, "*because* you are a doctor. But let me finish. I lived that life of complete wedlock with Nature for I dare not think how many years."

"And you did not get weary of it?" asked Lefevre.

"Weary of it? No! I returned to it always, after a pause of a few days for the rein-

vigoration I needed,—I returned to it with all the freshness of youth, with the advantage which, of course, mere youth can never have,—an amazingly rich experience. I revelled in the full lap of life. I passed through many lands, civilized and barbaric; but it was my especial delight to strike down to that simple, passionate, essential nature which lies beneath the thickest lacquer of refinements in our civilized societies. Oh, what a life it was!—what a life!

"But a change came: it must have been growing on me for some time without my knowledge. I commonly removed from society when I felt exhaustion coming on me; but on one occasion it chanced that I stayed on in the pleasant company I was in (I was then in Vienna). I did not exactly feel ill; I felt merely weary and languid, and thought that presently I would go to bed. Gradually I began to observe that the looks of my companions were bent strangely on me, and that the expression of their countenances more and more developed surprise and alarm. 'What is the

matter with you all?' I demanded; when they instantly cried, 'What is the matter with *you?* Have you been poisoned?' I rose and went and looked in a mirror; I saw, with ghastly horror, what I was like, and I knew then that I was *doomed.* I fled from that company forever. I saw that, when the alien life on which I flourished was gone out of me, I was a worn old man—that the Fire of Life which usually burned in my body, making me look bright and young, was now none of it my own; a few hot ashes only were mine, which Death sat cowering by! I could not but sit and gaze at the reflection of the seared ghastliness of that face, which was mine and yet not mine, and feel well-nigh sick unto death. After a while, however, I plucked up heart. I considered that it was impossible this change had come all at once; I must have looked like that—or almost like that—once or twice or oftener before, and yet life and reinvigoration had gone on as they had been wont. I wrapped myself up, and went out. I found a fit subject. I replenished my life as theretofore; my youthful, fresh ap-

pearance returned, and my confidence with it. I refused to look again upon my own, my worn face, from that time until to-night.

"But alarm again seized me about a year ago, when I chanced by calculation to note that my periods of abounding life were gradually getting shorter,—that I needed reinvigoration at more frequent intervals;—not that I did not take as much from my subjects as formerly—on the contrary, I seemed to take more—but that I lost more rapidly what I took, as if my body were becoming little better than a fine sieve. The last stage of all was this that you are familiar with, when my subjects began to be so utterly exhausted as to attract public notice. Yet that is not what has given me pause, and made me resolve to bring the whole weary, selfish business to an end. Could I not have gone elsewhere—anywhere, the wide world over—and lived my life? But I was kept, I was tethered here, to this London by a feeling I had never known before. Call it by the common fool's name of Love; call it what you will. I was fascinated by your sister Nora, even as

others had been fascinated by me, even as I had been in my youth by the bountiful, gracious beauty of Nature."

"I have wanted to ask you," said Lefevre, "for an explanation of your conduct towards Nora. Why did you—with your awful life—life which, as you say, was not your own, and your extraordinary secret—why did you remain near her, and entangle her with your fascinations? What did you desire?—what did you hope for?"

"I scarcely know for what I hoped. But let me speak of her; for she has traversed and completely eclipsed my former vision of Nature. I have told you what my point of view was,—alone in the midst of Nature. I was for myself the only consciousness in the world, and all the world besides was merely a variety of material and impression, to be observed and known, to be interested in and delighted with. I was thus lonely, lonely as a despot, when Nora, your sister, appeared to me, and instantly I became aware there was another consciousness in the world as great as, or greater than, my own,—

another person than myself, a person of supreme beauty and intelligence and faculty. She became to me all that Nature had been, and more. She expressed for me all that I had sought to find diffused through Nature, and at the same time she stood forth to me as an equal of my own kind, with as great a capacity for life. At first I had a vision of our living and reigning together, so to say, though the word may seem to you absurd; but I soon discovered that there was a gulf fixed between us,—the gulf of the life I had lived; she stood pure where I had stood a dozen years ago. So, gradually, she subverted my whole scheme of life; more and more, without knowing it, she made me see and judge myself with her eyes, till I felt altogether abased before her. But that which finally stripped the veil from me, and showed me myself as the hateful incarnation of relentlessly devouring Self, was my influence upon her, which culminated in the event of last night. Can you conceive how I was smitten and pierced with horror by the discovery that rose on me like a night-mare, that even on her sweet

pure, sumptuous life, I had unwittingly begun to prey? For that discovery flung wide the door of the future and showed me what I would become.

"Beautiful, calm, divine Nora! If I could but have continued near her without touching her, to delight in the thought and the sight of as one delights in the wind and the sunshine! But it could not be. I could only appear fit company for her if I refreshed and strengthened myself as I had been wont; but my new disgust of myself, and pity for my victims, made me shudder at the thought. What then? Here I am, and the time has come (as that old doctor said it would) when death appears more beautiful and friendly and desirable than life. Forgive me, Lefevre—forgive me on Nora's part,—and forgive me in the name of human nature."

Lefevre could not reply for the moment. He sat convulsed with heart-rending sobs. He put out his hand to Julius.

"No, no!" exclaimed Julius, "I must not take your hand. You know I must not."

"Take my hand," cried Lefevre. "I know

what it means. Take my life! Leave me but enough to recover. I give it you freely, for I wish you to live. You shall not die. By heaven! you shall not die. O Julius, Julius! why did you not tell me this long ago? Science has resource enough to deliver you from your mistake."

"Lefevre," said Julius,—and his eyes sparkled with tears and his weakening voice was choked—"your friendship moves me deeply—to the soul. But science can do nothing for me: science has not yet sufficient knowledge of the principle on which I lived. Would you have me, then, live on,—passing to and fro among mankind merely as a blight, taking the energy of life, even from whomsoever I would not? No, I must die! Death is best!"

"I will not let you die," said Lefevre, rising to take a pace or two on the deck. "You shall come home with me. I shall feed your life—there are dozens besides myself who will be glad to assist—till you are healed of the devouring demon you have raised within you."

"No, no, no, my dear friend!" cried Julius,

"I have steadily sinned against the most vital law of life."

"Julius," said Lefevre, standing over him, "my friendship, my love for you may blind me to the enormity of your sin, but I can find it in me to say, in the name of humanity, 'I forgive you all! Now, rise up and live anew! Your intelligence, your soul is too rare and admirable to be snuffed out like a guttering candle!'"

"Lefevre," said Julius, "you are a perfect friend! But your knowledge of this secret force of Nature, which we have both studied, is not so great as mine. Let me tell you, then, that this mystical saying, which I once scoffed at, is the profoundest truth :—

> 'Who loveth life shall lose it all ;
> Who seeketh life shall surely fall !'

There is no remedy for me but death, which (who knows?) may be the mother of new life!"

"It would have been better for you," said Lefevre, sitting down again with his head in his hands, "better—if you had never seen Nora."

"Nay, nay," cried Julius, sitting up, animate with a fresh impulse of life. "Better for her, dear, beautiful soul, but not for me! I have truly lived only since I saw her, and I have the joy of feeling that I have beheld and known Nature's sole and perfect chrysolite. But I must be quick, my friend; the dawn will soon be upon us. There is but one other thing for me to speak of—my method of taking to myself the force of life. It is my secret; it is perfectly adapted for professional use, and I wish to give it to you, because you are wise enough in mind, and great enough of soul, to use it for the benefit of mankind."

"I will not hear you, Julius!" exclaimed Lefevre. "I am neither wise nor great. Your perfect secret would be too much for me. I might be tempted to keep it for my own use. Come home with me, and apply it well yourself."

Julius was silent for a space, murmuring only, "I have no time for argument." Then his face assumed the white sickness of death, and his dark eyes seemed to grow larger and to burn with a concentrated fire.

"Lefevre!" he panted in amazement, "do you know that you are refusing such a medical and spiritual secret as the world has not known for thousands of years? A secret that would enable you—*you*—to work cures more wonderful than any that are told of the greatest Eastern Thaumaturge?"

"I have discovered a method," answered the doctor,—"an imperfect, clumsy method—for myself, of transmitting nervous force or ether for curative purposes. That, for the present, must be enough for me. I cannot hear your secret, Julius."

"Lefevre, I beg of you," pleaded Julius, "take it from me. I have promised myself, as a last satisfaction, that the secret I have guarded—it is not altogether mine: it is an old oriental secret—that now I would hand it over to you for the good of mankind, that at the last I might say to myself, 'I have, after all, opened my hand liberally to my fellow-men!' For pity's sake, Lefevre, don't deny me that small final satisfaction!"

"Julius," said Lefevre, firmly, "if your method

is so perfect—as I believe it must be from what I have seen—I dare not lay on myself the responsibility of possessing its secret."

"Would not my example keep you from using it selfishly?"

"Does the experience of another," demanded the doctor, "however untoward it may be, ever keep a man from making his own? I dare not—I dare not trust myself to hold your perfect secret."

"Then share it with others," responded Julius, promptly; "and I daresay it is not so perfect, but that it could be made more perfect still."

"I'll have nothing to do with it, Julius; you must keep and use it yourself."

"Then," cried Julius, throwing himself on his bed of cordage, "then there will be, indeed, an end of me!"

There was no sound for a time, but the soft rush of the sea at the bows of the yacht. They had left the Thames water some distance behind, and were then in that part of the estuary where it is just possible in mid-channel to

descry either coast. The glorious rose of dawn was just beginning to flame in the eastern sky. Lefevre looked about him, and strove to shake off the sensation, which would cling to him, that he was involved in a strange dream There lay Julius or Hernando Courtney before him; or at least the figure of a man with his face hid in his hands. What more could be said or done?

In the meantime light was swiftly rushing up the sky and waking all things to life. A flock of seagulls came from the depth of the night and wheeled about the yacht, their shrill screams strangely softened in the morning air. At the sound of them Julius roused himself, and raised himself on his elbow to watch their beautiful evolutions. As he watched, one and another swooped gracefully to the water, and hanging there an instant, rose with a fish and flew away. Julius flung himself again on his face.

"O, God!" he cried. "Is it not horrible? Even on such a beautiful day as this death wakes as early as life! Devouring death is ushered in by the dawn, hand in hand with

generous life! Awful, devilish Nature! that makes all creatures full of beauty and delight, and then condemns them to live upon each other! Nature is the sphinx: she appears soft and gentle and more lovely than heart can bear, but if you look closer, you see she is a creature with claws and teeth that rend and devour! I thought, fool that I was! that I had found the secret to solve her riddle! But it was an empty hope, a vain imagination. . . . Yet, I have lived! Yes, I have lived!"

He rose and stood erect, facing the dawn, with his back to Lefevre. He stood thus for some time, with one foot on the low bulwark of the vessel, till the sun leaped above the horizon and flamed with blinding brilliance across the sea.

"Ah!" he murmured. "The superb, the glorious sun! Unwearied lord of Creation Generous giver of all light and life! And yet, who knows what worlds he may not have drawn into his flaming self, and consumed during the æons of his existence? It is ever and everywhere the same: death in company

with life! And swift, strong death is better than slow, weak life! . . . Almost the splendor and inspiration of his rising tempt me to stay! Great nourisher and renewer of life's heat!"

He put off his fur coat, and let it fall on the deck, and stood for a while as if wrapt in ecstasy. Then, before Lefevre could conceive his intention, his feet were together on the bulwark, and with a flash and a plunge he was gone.

Amazement held the doctor's energies congealed, though but for an instant or two. Then he threw off hat and coat, and stood alert and resolute to dive to Julius's rescue when he rose, while those who manned the yacht prepared to cast a buoy and line. Not a ripple or flash of water passed unheeded; the flood of sunshine rose fuller and fuller over the world; moments grew to minutes, and minutes swelled to hopeless hours under the doctor's weary eyes, till it seemed to them as if the universe were only a swirling, greedy ocean;—but no sign appeared of his night's companion: his life

was quenched in the depths of the restless waters, as a flaming meteor is quenched in night. At length Lefevre ordered the yacht to stand away to the shore, his heart torn with grief and self-upbraiding. He had called Courtney his friend, and yet until that last he had never won his inner confidence; and now he knew that his friend—he of the gentle heart, the peerless intelligence, and the wildly erring life—was dead in the hour of self-redemption.

When he had landed, however, given to the proper authorities such information as was necessary, and set off by train on his return to town, the agitation of his grief began to assuage; and when next day, upon the publication in the papers of the news of Courtney's death by drowning, a solicitor called in Savile Row with a will which he had drawn up two days before, and by which all Julius Courtney's property was left to Dr. Lefevre, to dispose of as he thought best, "for scientific and humane ends," the doctor admitted to his reason that a death that could thus calmly be prepared was not lightly to be questioned.

"He must have known best," he said to himself, as he bowed over his hands—"he must have known best when to put off the poisoned garment of life he had woven for himself."

**THE END.**

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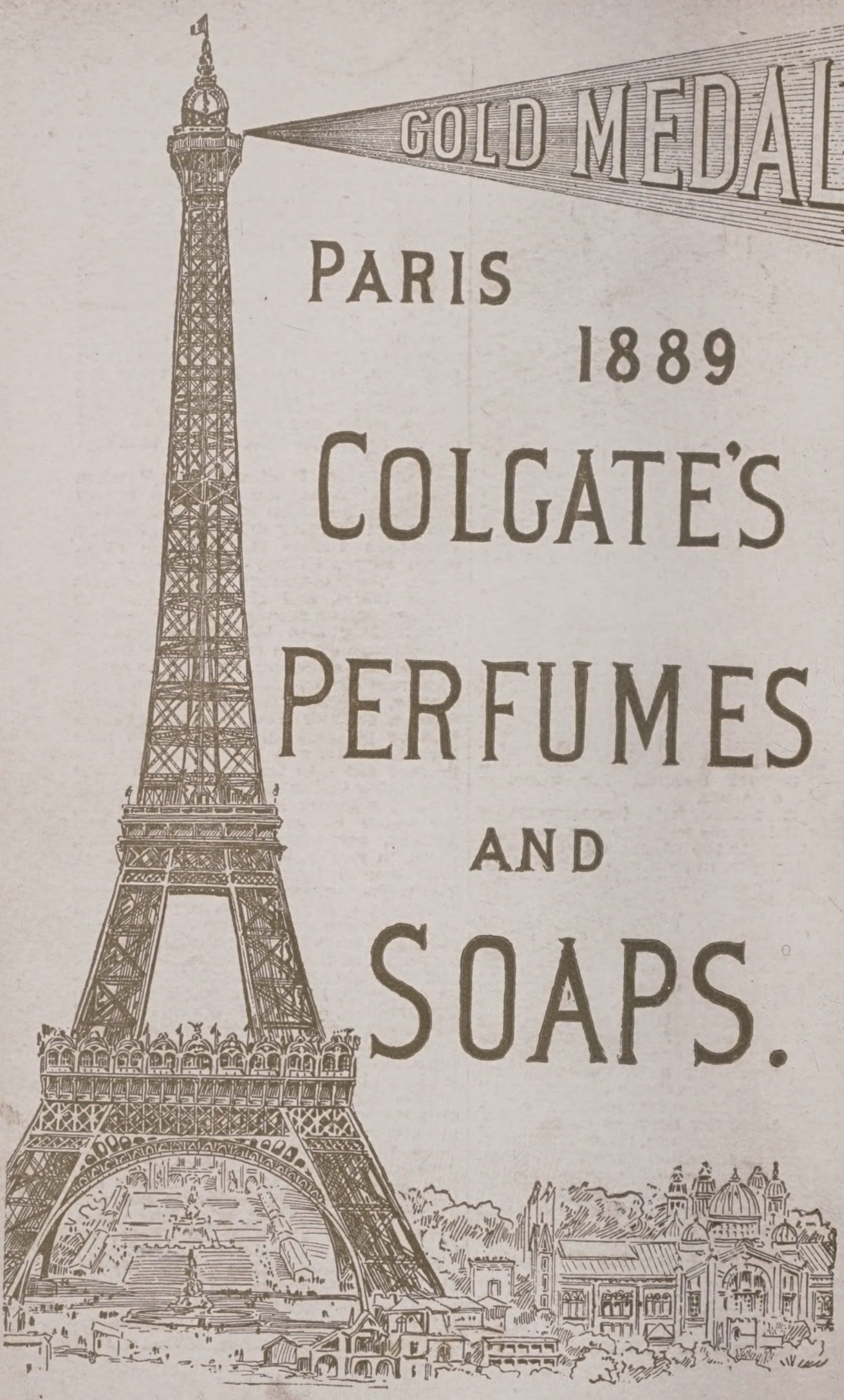
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